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BOGATSKY'S

GOLDEN TREASURY.



Florence Montgomery



June 13th 1878.

A GOLDEN TREASURY

15 years

For the Children of God.

BY C. H. V. BOGATSKY.

Bogatsky, Karl Heinrich

von, 1690-1776

EDITED AND ENLARGED

BY THE LATE REV. JAMES SMITH,

Author of "Daily Bible Readings," "Welcome to Jesus,"

"The Better Land," &c.

" Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,
Which before the cross I spend,
Life and health and peace possessing,
From the sinner's dying Friend."

LONDON:

T. NELSON AND SONS, PATERNOSTER ROW;

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P R E F A C E.

OLD books, like old friends, are very often special favourites. Having been long known and often proved, they are peculiarly loved; so that many say of a volume that has been long known, and often enjoyed, as David said of Goliath's sword, "There is none like it, give me that." Bogatsky has been the companion of many of the Lord's people for many long years; it has comforted, cheered, and directed them; so that, though many similar works have been published since, some of which, in some respects, may be even preferable to this, yet they cleave to the old volume still. Nor do we find fault of this, seeing they can say of it, as one of Job's friends of his discourse, "Lo, this, we have proved it."

In order, therefore, to meet this predilection, an attempt has been made to render the work more profitable still. Some of the portions were very short, these have been lengthened, that the different parts of the volume may be more uniform. The present editor's object has been, to keep Christ constantly before the eye, and to enforce the precepts of the Divine word on the Lord's people, by the consideration of what Christ is to them, and has done for them, that so the love of Christ may constrain them to every good word, and every good work.

It is hoped that no one will think that any undue liberty has been taken with this work ; the author acknowledges that he was assisted by others in its preparation at first, and the present effort is only a brother endeavouring to adapt the work more fully to the present circumstances of the Lord's people ; or, in other words, to carry out the author's design. May the Holy Spirit, who has often blessed this work already, and who alone can render any of our works useful to the Lord's people, condescend to accompany it with his own power and sanction, that so the traveller to the heavenly Jerusalem may be directed in his way, quickened in his pace, and cheered in his sorrowful moments. Let us, before entering upon its perusal, and every day as we sit down to read its pages, look up and beseech the Lord to make it a special blessing to our souls, so shall we read to profit, and bless God for its preparation.

JAMES SMITH.

CHEL TENNA H,

February 1856.

THE
GOLDEN TREASURY.

JANUARY 1.

HOSANNA. Mark xi. 9.

A NEW scene of time now begins. Present thy hosanna, O my soul, that the Lord may save, bless, and prosper thee ; may he grant thee a happy new year, indeed ! For this purpose begin it with a dedication of thyself to God. Thy time, circumstances, and life, are in his hands ; implore his blessing and protection over thee, this ensuing year. Begin this and every following day with prayer. Let God have thy first thoughts in the morning ; the impression they make will not easily be erased by worldly things. Grace is promised in the use of means ; be thou diligent then, and punctual in thine attendance upon them ; let thy daily request be for an increasing knowledge of thyself, and of Jesus Christ in his offices ; for a sense of pardoning mercy ; for a lively, vigorous faith ; for communion with the Father and the Son, through the Spirit ; for true holiness in

heart and life ; for strength and protection against thy spiritual foes ; and for persevering grace, to hold out to the end. Pray for the prosperity of Zion, (they prosper that love her); for thy friends and relations, (imploing the Almighty to take them into a covenant relation to himself); for a blessing on thy worldly affairs ; for a sanctified use of health or sickness, prosperity or adversity, as God shall please to send. Perhaps, O my soul, this may be the last year of the Lord's patience and thy pilgrimage. Is thy state safe ? Art thou a real believer in Jesus ? Is the oil of grace in thy vessel ? If so, thou art prepared for every emergency. If not, there is danger ; lose no time, but flee to Jesus, flee without delay.

Strive to enter in at the strait gate ; press through all difficulties, nor rest until thou hast the Spirit's witness in thy heart, that thou art accepted of God. Begin the new year thus, and thou shalt find at the end of it, that thou art crowned with loving-kindness and tender mercy.

Hark ! how from Calvary it sounds,
From the Redeemer's bleeding wounds !
" Pardon and grace I freely give ;
Poor sinner, look to me, and live ! "

O Saviour, may thy power be felt,
And cause each stony heart to melt !
O may Almighty power constrain :
My love shall not be told in vain.

With this New Year may I begin
To live to thee, and die to sin :
To enter by the narrow way
Which leadsto everlasting day !

I will ransom them from the power of the grave. I will redeem them from death; O death I will be thy plagues! O grave I will be thy destruction! Hosea xiii. 14. Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them. Col. ii. 15.

THE world is afraid of a hidden poison, where there is none. The real hidden poison is sin, which the Lord grant me to fear everywhere; for it has infected all things and all places. Sin is in my nature, and daily appears in my life; I will, therefore, daily look to Jesus, who has said, "Look unto me, and be ye saved." Jesus only can deliver me from the guilt, power, and consequences of sin; and it is only by faith in him that I can realize and enjoy this deliverance. Unless I am saved from sin, I cannot triumph over death, or look forward to the grave without fear. The sting of death is sin; faith in Jesus deprives death of its sting, and enables the believer to sing in the prospect of death, "Thanks be unto God who giveth me the victory." I would fear nothing but sin, and trust for deliverance from it, to no one but Jesus. O my Saviour, thou being my all-sufficient Preservative and Antidote in all places, dwell in me continually, and increase thou my faith, that I may know thee, and enjoy thee more and more. Take away all slavish fear of death and hell from my soul; for thou hast conquered both for me.

The gospel free salvation brings,
And Jesus is the gospel theme;
In death the pardoned sinner sings,
And triumphs in the Saviour's name.
"O death where is thy sting?" they cry,
"O grave, where is thy victory?"

But now, O Lord, thou art our Father. We are the clay, and thou our Potter; and we all are the work of thy hand. Isaiah lxliv. 8

BEING only clay in thy hands, O Lord, as I must not, so I would not, by any means, oppose thine operations. This is my desire, that thou wouldst prepare and perfect me for a meet vessel of grace, in spite of a thousand hinderances. No work of thine ever comes short of its intended perfection; for who can stay thy hand? It is thine own saying—"I will work, and who shall let it?" (Isaiah xliii. 13.)

An artist delights in his own workmanship, and would not designedly leave in it a single flaw or defect. (Phil. i. 6.) Look upon me, thou wise Creator; see how flesh and blood disorder my poor soul; and deliver me from all that may endanger my spiritual life. Knowing that thou canst do no less than a human artist, who is ever ready, and exerts his skill to mend and perfect his work, I trust that thou wilt not always suffer these impediments to hinder and disgrace thy work. Nay, such are thy wisdom and power, that out of darkness thou canst bring light; out of sickness, health; and though I am now destitute of strength and life, yet I believe thy work will be finished at last, and glorify the name of its Maker. (1 Peter v. 10.) Lord, carry it on by thy Spirit's might, and daily conform me more and more to thine image.

But ah! my inward spirit cries,
Still bind me to thy sway!
Else the next cloud that veils my skies
Drives all these thoughts away.

Oh that the Salvation of Israel were come out of Zion When the Lord brings back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad. Psalm xiv. 7.—[Divine answer!] If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed. John viii. 36. See also 31, 32.

NOT that sin is utterly destroyed, or entirely dead, and cannot stir any more in the heart of believers; for the Scripture speaks of them as having still to contend against the lusts of the flesh. (Gal. v. 17.) But it is true that pardoned sin has no power either to condemn or to reign over us; nay, it shall be weakened more and more. (Rom. vi. 12, 14.) So that Christ reigns even in the heart where sin, though hated, still finds a place; he reigns in the midst of his enemies; encouraging the believer to fight perseveringly beneath his banners, till he become more than conqueror, and be presented, without fault, before the throne of God. I will, therefore, daily seek grace from God to subdue my iniquities. to sanctify my nature, and conform me to the Lord Jesus; that being freed from condemnation, and consecrated to his service, I may bring forth the fruits of righteousness to his praise and glory. Thus shall I carry out the apostolic exhortation—"Grow in grace."

Oh, from the world's vile slavery,
Almighty Saviour, set me free,
And as my treasure is above,
Be there my thoughts be there my love.

Lord, draw my best affections hence,
Above this world of sin and sense,
Cause them to soar beyond the skies,
And rest not, till to Thee they rise.

All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.
 2 Tim. iii. 12. *The world hath hated them because they are not
 of the world.* John xvii. 14.

THE children of God do not love and please the world, and are often greatly afflicted on account of abounding wickedness, and particularly the profanation of the Lord's name. When you, therefore, can like the world, and the world can like you, there must be much worldliness in you ; for the world loves its own.

Many pretend to be Christians, but they will not endure persecution. Instead of this, they blame others for too much rashness, and not acting prudently enough, to avoid the mockings and hatred of the world. Therefore, they propose to take wiser measures ; and, in order to do more good, take great care not to be despised and rejected. But under this pretence of wisdom and prudence very often lie concealed a dangerous love of the world and fear of man. Be thou nobler-minded, live as a Christian indeed, and be not ashamed to bear the cross of Christ. "The disciple is not above his Master." Was it the lot of Him who is eternal Love, Wisdom, and Power, to endure the contradiction and reproach of sinners ? Thou wouldst be wiser than he, indeed, if thou couldst escape the scorn and hatred of the world. Lord, give me grace, that I may give thee glory.

May but his grace my soul renew,
 Let sinners gaze, and hate me too ;
 The Word that saves me doth engage
 A sure defence from all their rage.

All things are possible to him that believeth. Mark ix. 23.

FAITH is the principal thing in the Christian religion. It is the spiritual eye, enlightening the mind, directing the feet, and cheering the heart;—the whole turns upon it. As our faith is, so are our strength and fruitfulness in good works. At the same time, there is nothing more difficult to be maintained than faith, even after the work of grace has been actually wrought in our hearts. Therefore, nothing is more needful than to pray for faith as long as we live. May the Lord give and increase it continually!

Nothing can be stronger in the universe than the hand of faith. By this we lay sure hold on our most glorious and almighty Lord in heaven; and such an inviolable union is thus established between Christ and a believing soul, that none can separate the one from the other. Faith breaks through the greatest obstacles, removes mountains of difficulties, and possesses, as it were, a kind of omnipotence. “For this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” (1 John v. 4.) Nay, it even wrestles with God, and prevails. (Gen. xxxii. 28.) As straw cannot withstand the force of fire, so God, being a wall of fire around his people, the greatest power of our mighty enemies shall be consumed like the stubble. Look upon him steadfastly, my soul, and believe in him with a simple heart. Wondrous are his ways with his people, and past finding out; but at last, all their sorrows and strife, by the management of his infinite wisdom, must come to a glorious and triumphant end.

Christ is all, and in all. Col. iii. 11.

FOR a believer to receive and know Christ as his All, is the only means to live truly a life of faith; when he has done this, it will not be hard to resign all other things. To talk much of Christ, and make frequent use of his name one to another, is commendable, if the heart goes along with the words; but to call upon God the Father with a filial confidence, is also our duty, and does not in the least contradict the Apostle's meaning; for it is only through Christ that we can do it; and, as he himself assures us, the Father and He are one. Thou art my all, O gracious Lord: what then can I want? I desire no more than to be put always in mind of this, by the animating voice of thy Spirit; and to live upon thee is my wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. O Jesus, thou art my all, my light, my life, my food, my way, my end! I rejoice in thee, and glory in thy most holy and everblessed name; for it is all I want, all I wish, all I desire. Jesus only, Jesus always, Jesus all, shall be my motto.

My Lord, my Life, my Love,
To thee, to thee I call:
I cannot live if thou remove,
For thou art all in all.

Thy shining grace can cheer
This dungeon where I dwell;
'Tis paradise, when thou art here;
If thou depart, 'tis hell.

Nor earth, nor all the sky,
Can one delight afford;
No, not a drop of real joy,
Without thy presence, Lord.

They, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. Rom. x. 3, 11.

THE same mistake which proved so fatal to the Jews, proves equally fatal to many who pretend to call themselves Christians. Ignorant alike of the Divine character and their own, they build their hope of the favour of God and eternal life upon some works of righteousness which they have done, or intend to do; and reject the righteousness of Christ, in which alone they can be justified and accepted. In this mistake the decent and the profane are equally involved; for the worst of mankind fancy themselves possessed of some virtues and good qualities, that will entitle them to the Divine favour. The delusion remains, till the light of the Holy Spirit darts in, like a sunbeam, upon the mind, and discovers the guilt and pollution that defile the best of us. We then abhor ourselves, and look to the free grace of God in Christ Jesus for pardon and salvation. Thus we obtain a hope that maketh not ashamed, and rejoice in anticipation of the glory of God. Holy Spirit! lead me to Jesus daily, that I may receive from him, and use what I receive to his glory.

Not the labour of my hands
Can fulfil thy law's demands
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone:
Thou must save, and thou alone!

I cried with my whole heart ; hear me, O Lord, I will keep thy statutes.—Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them.—I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies ; for all my ways are before thee.—I have gone astray, like a lost sheep ; seek thy servant, for I do not forget thy commandments.
 Psalm cxix. 145, 165, 168, 176.

THE Word of God should be ever connected with prayer. Why is it that many hear and read, without being the better? They do not pray in faith for a blessing. We must, like David, pray with the utmost fervour, that we may understand and retain the Word of God, and bring forth fruit ; for a Christian has nothing so much at heart as that he may always act up to the Word and will of God. His prayer is, Lord, let my footsteps be sure, according to thy Word ; and let nothing contrary to thy law have dominion over me. If this prayer be granted, great will be our peace ; for the Word of God is a word of peace. Jesus himself will be our Peace, and then nothing will offend us ; we shall take heed unto all our ways before God, and so walk before him, as to continue humble, like David, who considered himself as a straying and lost sheep. Lord, we are, by nature, straying and lost sheep ; seek and fetch us back from the error of our ways, and preserve us in thy pasture. O bring us to the feet of Jesus, and then keep us there!

My soul hath gone too far astray
 My feet too often slip ;
 Yet, since I've not forgot thy way,
 Restore thy wand'ring sheep.

I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord. Gen. xlix. 18.

MANY have received comfort from these words in death, and waited in faith for their salvation. The thoughtless and impenitent wait only for temporal prosperity in their lives, and therefore cannot expect eternal bliss ; but, on the contrary, a dreadful judgment after death. O that they would examine themselves this very day ; that, at the eve of life, they might, like Jacob and Simeon, depart in peace. We will not, therefore, look for any earthly things, but for the Saviour, who is already come, who will grant us his salvation, his aid and deliverance in life and death, and will conduct us safely at last, though we should wait some time for his help. Yes, my Redeemer, they who wait, depend upon, and hope in thee, shall not be ashamed. Grant us only faith and patience, that we may wait on thee from one morning-watch to another ; and enduring all things, make the whole course of our lives one perpetual expectation of thy aid ; and may we ever abundantly experience thy help and salvation, especially at our latter end. O to die, leaning on the bosom of Jesus, enjoying his presence, and triumphing in his name !

His own soft hand shall wipe the tears
From ev'ry weeping eye ;
And pains and groans, and griefs and fears,
And death itself, shall die.

How long, dear Saviour, O how long
Shall this bright hour delay !
Fly swiftly round, ye wheels of time,
And bring the welcome day.

God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world, to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned. John iii. 16-18.

OH that these truly precious words were ever warmly impressed on our hearts; that they were our last thoughts at night, and the first at our waking in the morning; and that they were improved in such a manner as to make our dying-bed easy in the evening of our life, and ensure our rising with gladness in the morning of the resurrection! What more blessed and delightful meditations can I daily dwell upon than to think thus: God has loved me, even me when I was his enemy; and so loved me, that he gave me his only Son! Bless me with faith in Christ; then Christ is mine, and all things are mine. (1 Cor. iii. 21.) For, since he has not spared his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? (Rom. viii. 32.) He will never suffer a believing soul to perish; he has passed his word for it. He has told me that I shall not perish, I shall not be condemned, but have everlasting life, if I believe. This will I build and depend upon, to my last moments, as upon an immoveable rock. Lord Jesus, on thee will I rest in life and in death, and on thee alone!

O! for this love let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break;
And all harmonious human tongues
The Saviour's praises speak

In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. Col. i. 14. Having forgiven you all trespasses. Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross. Col. ii. 13, 14.

HAST thou, O my soul, felt the weight of thy own guilt and misery, and been enabled, in reality and truth, to lay hold, by faith, of the blood of Christ for thy redemption? Then hast thou a sure foundation to build upon; let it be thy constant care firmly to depend upon the blessed declarations of the Gospel; repair to Christ for everything thou needest. Has he brought life and immortality to light? Then look unto him, and live. Is there redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins? Then, notwithstanding all thy guilt, rely cheerfully upon his atonement. Has he blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against thee? Then shake off self-righteous dependences, and legal fears also. Did he die for thy sins? Then let his goodness and love lead thee to unfeigned repentance; let the sense of thy sins break thy heart, but encourage thy hope in the Gospel. In Jesus is all thou needest; and all that is in Jesus, is for thee. Bless his holy name!

Not all the blood of beasts,
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away the stain.

But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,
Takes all our sins away;
A sacrifice of nobler name,
And richer blood than they.

Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings. Psal. xvii. 8. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust. His truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Psal. xci. 4.

NO one, O Lord, has more need continually to keep close to thee in prayer and faith, and at the same time no one is more unable to do it than I, the least of all thy flock! O that thou wouldest be graciously pleased to incline and enable me to pursue this blessed work! And grant that thy good Spirit, according to his own pleasure, may never suffer me to be faint and backward in the same. While I truly rest on thy promise, my faith trusts in thy power, and my soul hides under the wings of thy grace, I am sure of defence, power, and comfort; but as soon as I wander from thee, I am in danger of losing the comfortable sense of these privileges, and falling into various errors and perplexities. Therefore keep me by thy power, and sweetly solace me with thy love. Guide me, O Lord, by thy counsel in this world, and at last receive me into glory. Amen.

He that has made his refuge God
Shall find a most secure abode;
Shall walk all day beneath his shade,
And there at night shall rest his head

Thrice happy man! thy Maker's care
Shall keep thee from the fowler's snare,
Satan, the fowler, who betrays
Unguarded souls a thousand ways.

What, though a thousand at thy side,
At thy right hand ten thousand died,
Thy God his chosen people saves
Among the dead, amidst the graves.

From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Matt. iv. 17.

THE kingdom of heaven appertains to those who repent. The first mark of repentance is poverty of spirit; whence Jesus saith, (chap. v. 3), "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for their's is the kingdom of heaven." John preached repentance; Jesus preaches it here; and so did his apostles afterward. Thus true repentance is necessary for all; and the beginning of it is, to acknowledge ourselves poor miserable sinners, depraved by nature, and totally void of any righteousness and worth of our own; to confess our nakedness; to drop all the fig-leaves of vain excuses and false comforts; to lay open our poverty and wants before God; to accuse ourselves, and plead guilty of all our sins, but seek mercy from Christ. If we do this, we are blessed, and the kingdom of heaven is ours. This poverty of spirit is both the first and the last foundation laid in the heart; for the faithful are more and more grounded in poverty of spirit, the nearer they approach to their consummation; and just as they are leaving earth for heaven, they feel themselves to be less than nothing and vanity.

Pure are the joys above the sky,
And all the region peace;
No wanton lips, nor envious eye,
Can see or taste the bliss.

Those holy gates for ever bar
Pollution, sin, and shame;
None shall obtain admittance there
But followers of the Lamb.

Pray without ceasing. 1 Thess. v. 17.

IF we have not got grace enough, it is because we do not pray enough. For, most true it is, we need not strive to move God to compassion, and extort, as it were, by our prayers, the blessings which he has promised. Very far from it. He is every minute communicating himself to us; in every word he holds forth Christ and every good thing to us. But we must always have a soul hungering after Christ, and by incessant prayer stretch out the hand of faith to receive him. This is chiefly to be understood of the inward desires and groanings of our spirit; but we must not omit to pour out our supplications daily, as often as we can, by words; else our secret mental prayers, at last, may become so secret as to cease entirely. Prayer is the breath of the soul, the vital evidence whereby we know of its health and life, and without which it must quickly die. O for grace to pray without ceasing, and thus enjoy incessant communion with God.

Holy Father, lend an ear,

While I sue in Jesus' name;

Surely thou wilt kindly hear,

Since I bring no human claim;

Let me for adoption stay,

Only give me power to pray.

Grant me comfort, or deny;

Visit, or from me depart;

Only let thy Spirit cry,

Abba, Father, in my heart:

Abba, Father, would I say,

Only give me power to pray

Abide in me. John xv. 4. *Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.* John vi. 68. *It is good for me to draw near to God. I have put my trust in the Lord God.* Psalm lxxiii. 28.

TO abide in Christ, who is our Righteousness and Strength, and not to be moved from him, is the very life and power of Christianity. We are in this happy state, when our thoughts are going out after him, our hearts cleaving to him, and our minds staying upon him. To know Christ, and thus to abide in him, as our Righteousness, brings peace and joy; this joy in the Lord is certainly followed with strength to overcome sin and the world, which believers renounce the more readily, as they have found something better in Christ. Satan is violently opposed to this, and therefore tries by all means to allure, or drive us away from Christ. Consequently, watchfulness and prayer are daily necessary, lest we should be led away by his wiles. Simple believers look to Christ *for* all, go to Christ *with* all, and depend on Christ *through* all; thus they abide in Jesus, and Jesus abides in them. May the Lord give me grace, likewise, immoveably to abide in him; then shall I conquer sin, overcome the world, and always triumph in Christ.

O draw me, Saviour, after Thee,
 So shall I run and never tire;
 With gracious words still comfort me
 Be thou my hope, my sole desire;
 Free me from every weight: nor fear
 Nor sin can come, if Thou art here:

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Gal. iii. 13, 14.

THE Spirit of Sanctification is the gift of Christ. Consequently, there is a great difference between moral actions done by our own strength, and true sanctification of the Spirit. The latter cannot take place before the soul truly receives Christ, and abides in him as its only Propitiation, Righteousness, and Peace; for he, being first made to us, of God, our Righteousness, will then be made our Sanctification likewise (1 Cor. i. 30.) And the kingdom, work, and image of God will go on best when we trust least to our own strength. The yoke of Christ becomes easy, and his burden light, when he lives and works in us, and we, in a childlike temper, live henceforth to him who died for us. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, that he may confer on us all the blessings of the Gospel, and he confers on us all the blessings of the Gospel, to fit us for all the glories of heaven. O what grace, what love is displayed by Jesus!

The law commands, and makes us know
What duties to our God we owe;
But 'tis the gospel must reveal
Where lies the strength to do his will.

The law discovers guilt and sin,
And shows how vile our hearts have been,
Only the gospel can express
Forgiving love, and cleansing grace.

My soul, no more attempt to draw
Thy life and comfort from the law;
Fly to the hope the gospel gives,
The man that trusts the promise, lives,

Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Rom. x. 4.

THE law calls for a perfect righteousness, which, in ourselves, never will be found; but all its demands were fulfilled by our Surety. Every true believer finds that righteousness in Christ which he stands in need of; and is enabled, through the Spirit, to rest upon it for justification; he faithfully endeavours to obey the law as the great rule of his duty both to God and man; yet he is so sensible of his own manifold defects, that he would utterly despair, if he could not look up unto Jesus, and say, "Thou wilt answer for me, O Lord, my God!" Well may the Apostle exclaim, "Yea doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." I will renounce all righteousness, as the ground of my justification before God, but the righteousness of Jesus only; yet will I daily walk by the precepts of his holy word.

Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
'Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.

When from the dust of death I rise,
To take my mansion of the skies,
Even then shall this be all my plea—
"Jesus hath lived, and died for me."

But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto Noah, into the ark. Then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her to him into the ark. Gen. viii. 9.

THE dove-like spirit communicated to the soul in regeneration, can find no rest for the sole of its foot until it brings us to Jesus, who is the true Ark of the covenant. Many, on their first awakening from sin, apply themselves to very hard works and rigorous duties, thereby expecting to find rest for their wounded consciences. But, though the right and diligent use of all the means of grace is absolutely required, great care must be taken not to quiet ourselves by that only. We should not place any confidence at all in our own doings, but look for rest only through the blood of Christ. To be found in him justified and accepted, would soon fill our hearts with peace, nay, prompt, encourage, and enable us to abound in every good work. My soul, I charge thee never to rest but in Jesus. The world is a wilderness, the church is imperfect, thy very duties are mixed with sin; thou wilt, therefore, never find rest such as thy immortal nature requires, but in Jesus. His blood, shed for thy sin; his righteousness, wrought for thy justification; his word, given for thy comfort and his prevalent intercession at the Father's right hand, will give thee rest in every stormy day, and every trying hour. As the dove returned to the ark of Noah, so do thou return from all thy wanderings to Jesus.

So grant me, Lord, from every stain
Of sinful passion free,
Aloft, through virtue's purer air,
To steer my course to Thee!

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. John xiii. 35. Forbearing one another in love. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath; but be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you. Eph. iv. 2, 3, 26, 32.

HUMBLE Christians never affect singularity, nor set up extraordinary claims: they rather study to be of one mind, and strive not about words, or places of distinction, lest the general harmony subsisting among them, and the edification of souls, should be hindered. Whoever judges and blames everything, and can never agree, or join in devotion with other experienced Christians, is puffed up with self-conceit, and is in the way to make a dangerous shipwreck; "for pride comes before a fall." Believer, cultivate humility. Take thy place at the feet of Jesus, and learn of him. He sets thee an example of love, patience, forbearance, long-suffering, and readiness to forgive. Remember, if you trust in his finished work for acceptance with God, you are bound to copy his example in your dealings with men. If you know these things, happy are you if you do them. Practical conformity to the life of Christ, is the best proof that we have the Spirit of Christ.

When weaker Christians we despise,
We do the gospel mightily wrong,
For God, the gracious and the wise,
Receives the feeble with the strong.

Let pride and wrath be banish'd hence,
Meekness and love our souls pursue;
Nor shall our practice give offence
To saints—the Gentile, or the Jew.

While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

Matt. xxv. 5.

O THAT I may be roused out of my slumber, and be watchful and ready against the coming of my Bridegroom! How many are there that set out, in good earnest, in their way to heaven, and run well for some time, but, at last, are lulled to rest, and entangled again with a false notion of liberty! Even the wise virgins fell asleep. Let this be a warning to me, O Lord! Set thou a guard before my eyes, ears, and other faculties, lest the world should again enter through these avenues of the heart. If the spark be not speedily extinguished, it will soon break out into a flame; thus sin is of a progressive nature, and its venom spreads quickly and very wide, unless it be stopped and opposed in time. Watch, therefore, over this unsteady heart of mine, O thou Keeper of Israel; that as soon as it begins to wander from thee, I may be alarmed, and may flee from sin as from a serpent. Give me grace to look upon every hour as my last, so that, being ever wisely upon my guard, I may meet thee with joy, when my time is run out, whenever it shall please thee to call me hence.

The fearful soul, that tires and faints,
And walks the ways of God no more,
Is but esteemed almost a saint,
And makes his own destruction sure.

Lord, let not all my hopes be vain,
Create my heart entirely new;
Which hypocrites could ne'er attain,
Which false apostates never knew.

But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat. Matt. xiii. 25.

NO wonder that Christians lose their power and strength, if the enemy of souls find them asleep. How soon may he gain an advantage from without, if a strict guard be not kept within! Though Satan seems to sleep sometimes, and we should appear to be in no great danger, it is only his stratagem to make us careless. He never fails to be vigilant, and watch his opportunity, that he may offer us battle with advantage; and who knows but he may gain the victory by those very sins to which perhaps we, for many years, had hardly any temptation! How cunningly does he work! how enticing is the world! Even in lawful things, very often, the most dangerous snares lie hidden. A single word that we hear may be able to disturb our peace. One unguarded look is sometimes enough to infatuate our hearts. There is danger on all sides. Unless the Lord open our eyes, and preserve us on all occasions, each of us, even the best, may still be overcome, and fatally hurt, by sin and the world. Satan is particularly intent upon beguiling the godly; and having caught them in his net, he triumphs exceedingly over them. O Lord, suffer me never to sink into spiritual slumbers again!

Whene'er my careless hands hang down,
O let me see thy gathering frown,
And feel thy warning eye;
And starting, cry, from ruin's brink,
Save, Jesus, or I yield, I sink!
O save me, or I die!

The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried; and their cry came up unto God, by reason of the bondage. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them. Exodus i. 12; ii. 23, 25.

THE more we are oppressed by our spiritual and temporal enemies, the more will the kingdom of God increase in and through us. And when trouble and dangers oppress us most, God hastens to our aid, and makes our necessity itself the means of our relief. What a disastrous period was that during which the children of the Israelites were cast into the river! But God was even preparing for them, in Moses, their deliverer. When Moses came, they were not relieved immediately; for their calamities increased. This was God's method. They cried the more to God, and he relieved them by signs and wonders. After this, their distress was greater than ever at the Red Sea. (For, after God has shown his glory in assisting us, he can still send greater trials.) But, when they were beset on all sides by distress and death, then came the most glorious succour of all, and their enemies perished in the Red Sea. Lord, suffer us not to despair in any extremity: but cause us to believe and feel that the greater our distress, the nearer and more glorious will be thine aid; that man's extremity, is thine opportunity; and that at evening time, it shall be light.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. We love him because he first loved us. 1 John iv. 10, 19. He that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. We will come unto him, and make our abode with him. John xiv. 21, 23.

WHAT a glorious promise! What manner of love is this! Lord, I would not exchange my cross and sufferings, much less thy love, for the love and honours of the world. Only make it more known to me how great thy love is, and how much thou hast forgiven me, that I may love thee much again, and be thereby still better purged from the inordinate love of temporal things. It is my earnest desire, that the gates of my heart should be open to none but thee, that thou alone mayest dwell in me. Shed thy love abroad in my heart; quicken and renew all the faculties of my mind and body; and work everything in and for me. Keep thy precious, thy infinite love, constantly before my mind. May it be my daily meditation, the joy and rejoicing of my heart; and in seasons of sorrow, grief, and sadness, may I turn to thy great love for comfort, joy, and peace. O to be able to say with holy John, "We have known, and believed, the love that God hath to us, God is love;" so shall we be able to add, "We love him, because he first loved us." Love in God begets love in us, just in proportion as it is believed and realized by us.

With pitying eyes, the Prince of Grace
Beheld our helpless grief:
He saw, and, O amazing love!
He ran to our relief.

Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. 2 Cor. v. 9.

THIS indeed is the true disposition of a soul espoused to Christ. She has but one care, which is to please him in all things. And this desire to do his will is, as it were, the ring and seal of her Bridegroom; which she may look upon even in the absence of all spiritual joy, as a token for good, that she is his spouse.

Ought not then each day, O my soul, to witness a new recognition of thy union to Christ? He is desirous that thou shouldest be betrothed unto him even now, and waits only for thy consent. Harken, O daughter; consider, and incline thine ear; be no longer married to the world. Forget thine own people and thy father's house, and take him alone for thy husband; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty. Wilt thou give the refusal to this glorious and kind Saviour? I hope not. Give it rather to the world, and resolutely say, It is enough; I have done with thee, O poor world; mine eyes and my feet shall henceforth only be directed to the blessed and eternal city of the new Jerusalem, where my heavenly Bridegroom resides. And O what need have I to be duly prepared, dressed, and beautified, against his coming, and the time of his taking me home to himself! Lord Jesus, keep me longing for thine appearance!

O may I stand before the Lamb,
When earth and seas are fled:
And hear the Judge pronounce my name,
With blessings on my head.

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Heb. iv. 16.

O THAT we were all so wise as to prepare and provide ourselves in due time with the right armour of faith, before the time of need and hour of death approach ! Come, my reader, let us begin now, and go directly to the gate of mercy ; lest we should come too late, and be undone. Behold the encouragement of Christ. " I am the Door and the Way," (John x. 9 ; xiv. 6.) Now by this door thou mayest find the entrance into the heart and favour of God ; Christ himself sitting on a mercy-seat, to receive and welcome the vilest of sinners. And there is no drawing near to God but through him, and clothed in the robes of the righteousness of our only Redeemer, Mediator, and Advocate. He is Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, nay, the very ALL in ALL to believers. With Christ they can never part ; and he can never part with them. Believing this, let us go to his throne, plead his promises, and expect a full blessing. Jesus loves to see us come to him, and delights to hear us ask large things of him.

Of him who did salvation bring,
I would for ever think and sing ;
Arise, ye guilty ! he'll forgive ;
Arise, ye poor ! he will relieve.

Ask but his grace, and lo ! 'tis giv'n :
Ask, and he leads from hell to heaven :
Though sin and sorrow wound my soul,
Jesus, thy balm can make it whole.

Guide thou, O Lord, guide thou my course,
And draw me on with welcome force ;
Still make me walk, still make me tend,
By thee my Way, to God my End.

God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.
Rom. v. 8-10.

HERE I have much more reason to cry out than Moses, (Deut. xxxiii. 3,) "The Lord loved the people." But here I must beseech thee too, O Lord, that this infinite gift of thy Son may appear to me greater and greater every day; and that thy love, shining out in his redemption, may go on so to increase in my soul, as to disperse all hard thoughts of thy goodness. Whenever a slanderous spirit tries to lift up his head, grant that my faith and love may be quickened and strengthened in such a manner, as heartily to praise thy great love, in spite of all his suggestions. This is the chief desire which I offer unto thee in all my prayers, night and day. The want of faith and love, I am sensible, is still my greatest want. My soul is like a large empty vessel; but I pray thee to fill it speedily, notwithstanding any opposition that may be made by my unrenewed part. O to be emptied of self, and filled with Christ!

Come, guilty souls, and flee away,
Like doves, to Jesus' wounds;
This is the welcome gospel day,
Wherein free grace abounds.

God loved the world, and gave his Son
To drink the cup of wrath;
And Jesus says, he'll cast out none
That come to him by faith.

For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps. 1 Peter ii. 21.

TO believe in Christ for justification is but one half of the duty of faith. It respects Christ, only as he died and suffered for us, as he made atonement for our sins, peace with God, reconciliation for us, and became our Righteousness. Unto these ends, he is indeed primarily and principally proposed unto us in the Gospel; and with respect unto them we are exhorted to receive him, and to abide in him. But this is not all that is required of us. Christ in the Gospel is proposed unto us as our Pattern and Example of holiness. And as it is a false imagination, that the whole end of his life and death was to exemplify and confirm the doctrine of holiness, which he preached; so, to neglect his being our Example, so as not seriously to consider him by faith unto that end, and labour after conformity to him, is a great and destructive evil. Wherefore let us meditate on what he was, what he did, and how in all instances of duties and trials he conducted himself, until a glorious image of his perfect holiness be established in our minds, and all around take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus, and that we walk even as He walked. Jesus, Saviour, conform me to thyself, and fill me with thy love!

Let me walk with Christ below,
In his likeness daily grow,
Follow him, and run my race,
Daily nourish'd by his grace.

The mystery—made known to all nations, for the obedience of faith
Rom. xvi. 25, 26.

THE obedience of faith here spoken of, is the same thing as believing the report of the Gospel (Rom. x. 16)—a hearty submission to the righteousness of God, even to Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believeth. This is the obedience of faith; strictly speaking, by which we give glory to God, take full shame to ourselves, renounce all that nature is proud of, and are brought to rest, for our justification and acceptance with God, on that alone which has satisfied his law and justice. However slightly we may be disposed to pass over this, it is a high point of obedience. God alone effectually teaches this practical lesson; and he who would learn it, must seek it by much prayer continually; for in vain shall we strive to obey God in other things, until we learn to obey him in this. Careless reader! see to it that you learn your need of Christ. Awakened and distressed sinner! seek not to heal yourself by a forced obedience: learn the obedience of faith, that you may be purged in your conscience from dead works, to serve God. Self-despairing sinner! embrace the merciful invitation of the gospel, and live. Believer! let your fruit be unto holiness; so shall the end be everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Within me, Lord, thy Spirit place,
Conveying health, and peace, and power;
And let me daily grow in grace,
That I may love and serve thee more.

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Matthew xi. 28.

THIS is a free invitation to every weary and heavy-laden sinner, made by Him who alone is able to take away the load and guilt of sin. Every person under the pressure of sin; not only may, but must, come to Jesus, thus laden with a consciousness of guilt, if he hopes to succeed for pardon. While we endeavour to prepare our way by self-created claims, we rather fill it with stumbling-blocks, whereby our souls are hindered from attaining to the salvation of Christ. Christ would have us to believe on him who justifieth the ungodly: he came as a Physician for the sick, and does not expect that they should recover their health, in the least degree, before they come to him. The cure is entirely his own; and thus he shows forth the exceeding riches of his grace, pardoning our sins, and saving us freely. (Ephesians ii. 5, 9.) It is no affront to Christ, no contempt of the justice and holiness of God, to come to God while we are consciously unworthy of his favour; but rather, it is an affront to the saving grace, merit, and fulness of Jesus, if we endeavour to make ourselves righteous and holy before we receive Christ himself, and all holiness and righteousness in him by faith. Reader, all you need is in Christ; come to him at his bidding; receive and enjoy repose.

A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
 In thy kind arms I fall:
 Be thou my strength and righteousness,
 My Jesus, and my all.

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it. Matt. xiii. 45, 46.

BLESSED are they to whom the Gospel has made known the unsearchable riches of Christ. He is that one Pearl of great price, in comparison of which, all other goodly things that men desire are worthless. Without him we are poor and miserable, though we abound in all manner of worldly store. But if we have found him, and discovered the excellency of his name, we are in possession of a treasure that makes us rich indeed, and have reason to be content with our portion, though stripped of every earthly comfort. For the Father giveth grace and glory, even eternal life, in his Son Jesus Christ; and he that hath the Son of God hath life.

O my soul! thou, like the merchantman, hast been seeking goodly pearls, and eagerly looking here and there for happiness, all thy days. Hast thou at length been enlightened to perceive where true joys are to be found? Then wilt thou be willing to sell all, in order to win Christ, and be found in him. If there is anything that thou art unwilling to part with for his sake, thou knowest not his value, thou art not worthy of Him. Renounce all, heartily, at once, and for ever, and so receive Christ, that priceless pearl, as thy own, and thou art made rich for ever.

Jesus, before thy face I fall,
My Lord, my life, my hope, my all;
For I have nowhere else to flee,
No sanctuary, Lord, but thee.

God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 2 Cor. iv. 6.

WITHOUT this saving knowledge we have no God, no Christ, no grace, no faith, no union with Christ, no actual justification, pardon of sin, peace, or eternal life. But whoever has found Christ, the Pearl of great price, the hidden Treasure, has found matter of great rejoicing; for, he was poor before, and this Treasure enriches him; he was naked before, but, finding this treasure, he is gloriously clothed; he was forced before to feed upon husks, but now he feeds upon the bread of life; he was far in debt before, but now he sees that the debt is paid, that he is justified from all things, and pardoned for ever; he was a child of wrath before, but now he is a child of God; he was a captive and in chains before, but now he is set at liberty; condemned before, but now there is no condemnation to him, nor to any one that is in Christ Jesus; he was a fool before, but now he is made wise to salvation. Reader! canst thou set thy seal to the truth and power of such experience! Then thou art wise indeed; if not, thou hast much to learn: apply with speed, and remember, it is God alone that gives this light and knowledge. Ask of him, plead with him, and he will give it thee; making thee wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus.

Father of love and grace,
Thy light to me impart,
Reflected from thy dear Son's face,
And beaming on my heart.

This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ. 1 John iii. 23. God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Chap. iv. 9.

THE Father breaks forth, as it were, through the whole Scripture, in praises of his Son. He calls out from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." (Matt. xvii. 5.) Nothing, therefore, can be more agreeable to him, than for us to receive this his Son, and to believe his report. (John xvi. 27.) On doing this, we shall have life; but by omitting it, we treat him as a liar. Unbelief, therefore, which refuses to accept of this great gift, is, no doubt, the greatest of all sins. O Lord, teach me this, and grant me faith.

Why art thou so backward, O my soul, to believe, like the rest of God's children, in Christ? Hast thou not as good a right to it as they have? Who can dispute with thee this privilege? It is the express will of the Father; nay, he even commands thee to do it. Has he given his only Son, by an act of inconceivable love, to die for thee, to the very end that thou shouldest live? O what a pleasing thing will it be to him, to put thy whole trust upon this his well-beloved Son! This would be the joy of his heart, more than anything else; therefore delay no longer to receive what his love has offered thee, in his beloved Son.

Author of faith, to thee I lift
My weary, longing eyes;
O let me now receive that gift—
My soul without it dies!

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.
Rev. v. 12.

O LORD, what mean and slight notions have I of thy great power? By these I am discouraged, and thou art robbed of thy praise. Grant, therefore, that, though I would always be duly abased, and convinced of my vileness in such a manner as never to ascribe any good to myself, or think myself worthy of the least thing, (for at the best I am but an unprofitable servant), yet thy grace and power may at the same time appear to me abundantly greater than all my sins, so that I may have always encouragement enough to believe in and praise thy holy name.

Holy Spirit, glorify Jesus in me, and before me, that I may see his worth, trust his blood, taste his love, and be made happy in him. Then, O then, shall I unite with all the saints on earth, and all the hosts of heaven, in ascribing power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing, to his dear, dear name. O for high and exalted thoughts of Jesus, that my heart may glow with love to him!

Come, let us join our cheerful songs
With angels round the throne;
Ten thousand thousand are their tongues,
But all their joys are one.

"Worthy the Lamb that died," they cry,
"To be exalted thus!"
"Worthy the Lamb," our lips reply.
"For he was slain for us!"

My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips. Psalm lxiii 5. Alleluia! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come. Rev. xix. 6, 7.

WHAT tends not to thy glory, O Lord, and is not thy own work, (whatever appearance it may have,) is not really good and profitable. Preserve and assist me, therefore, to do all things as for thee, in thy sight, and to thy honour; may my soul be ever magnifying thy name, O my dear Redeemer and Bridegroom, and my whole conversation be directed to thy praise. Grant that my heart and mouth may be ever full of thy great mercies, and overflow continually with thanksgiving.

My soul, I charge thee to seek satisfaction in Jesus, and in Jesus only; then, when satisfied with his love, thou wilt praise him with joyful lips. Never forget that Jesus, thy Jesus, is the Lord God Omnipotent, and that he reigns over all, and, reigning over all, will secure thy welfare. Soon, very soon, will he come to take thee to himself, and present thee to his Father, as his beloved, blood-bought bride. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!

My God, my King, thy various praise
Shall fill the remnant of my days;
O let thy grace employ my tongue,
Till death and glory raise the song.

The wings of every hour shall bear
Some grateful tribute to thine ear;
And ev'ry setting sun shall see
New works of duty done to thee.

Forsake not the works of thine own hands. Psalm cxxxviii. 8. He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ. Phil. i. 6.

THE right way to grow in grace is to give up thyself wholly to thy heavenly Father, who knoweth all thy wants, and hath engaged to supply them. Then labour diligently to walk with Christ, and carefully cherish the new life, which, be it ever so weak and little now, in comparison with the old man, will increase, and gradually out-grow him, as a new skin does the old. May the Lord only give us grace to watch against the opposite extreme, so as never to be lulled into a false rest or a lukewarm spirit; but to be ever diligently and seriously employed in crucifying the flesh, and using all the means of grace; then we need not to be troubled as though there was danger lest the work of God should not continue and advance within us. But this can only be done by living on Jesus, cleaving to Jesus, and growing up into Jesus. As we live upon Christ, we live above self, sin, and the world, and so grow like him. My soul, fix thy eye and thy heart on Jesus every day, and all the day, so wilt *thou* grow in grace, and become like Jesus.

I need the influence of thy grace,
To speed me in thy way,
Lest I should loiter in my race,
Or turn my feet astray.

Are not thy mercies sov'reign still,
And thou a faithful God?
Wilt thou not grant me warmer zeal,
To run the heav'nly road?

The fashion of this world passeth away. 1 Cor. vii. 31.

AS long as we feed on the husks of the world, and are in love with it, we are neither willing nor able to taste the comforts of the love of God. But, when sin and the world are become an abomination to us, and we desire to be rid of them, and seek diligently unto Jesus Christ, we are then in a right way to receive the love of God, and every blessing of salvation. And though we are chastened by the Lord, yet he is not angry with us, but does it to embitter sin and the world more and more to us, and to make us loathe them, that we may not be condemned with the world.

My soul, forget not that thou art in an enemy's country, and that all around thee is false, however fair. Jesus, and Jesus only, is thy satisfying portion, and his glorious example thy fashion. Conformity to him should be thy aim; for just in proportion as thou art conformed to him, thou art holy, useful, and happy. Spirit of God, deliver me from the spirit of the world, and conform me to Jesus! I would resemble him in all things, and so glorify his rich, free, and sovereign grace.

Let worldly minds the world pursue,
It has no charms for me;
Once I admir'd its trifles too,
But grace has set me free.

Its pleasures now no longer please,
No more content afford;
Far from my heart be joys like these,
Now I have known the Lord.

Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. Matthew vi. 13. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power. Rev. iv. 10, 11.

ONE that is really poor in spirit, though he has practised the duties of the Christian life ever so long, and ever so diligently, always thinks himself to have received but a very little portion of Christ, and the work of sanctification hardly to be begun in his soul. So far is he from believing he has already attained it, that, after all his best actions, he counts himself not worthy to be called by the name of a grateful son ; he is never pleased with himself. No degree of holiness will satisfy his soul. He seeks and finds no rest or comfort but in the infinite mercy of God, and in the pardon of his sins by faith. At the same time, he does not divide Christ, but he receives him in all his offices, and gives himself entirely up to him without reserve, as his Prophet, Priest, and King, resigning himself entirely into his hands, to be more and more sanctified and perfected. In this state he is safe indeed : he is prepared for death, and has no reason to be anxiously afraid, though earnestly desirous of higher degrees of sanctification. Christ is his life, God is his Father, the Holy Spirit is his Guide, heaven is his everlasting home ; and his daily language should be, "I will trust, and not be afraid."

The kingdom is thine we proclaim,
Thy power prevails over men ;
The glory is due to thy name,
For ever and ever. Amen.

He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: this is all my salvation, and all my desire. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. I have made a covenant with my chosen. Psalm lxxxix. 3.

THIS was David's plea and confidence, when, with eternity full before him, he was just going to make his appearance before an infinitely pure God. This must be our plea also, if ever we would obtain the approbation of our Judge. After a life of the most eminent holiness, the best of men will have reason to cry out, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord!" It is true, indeed, the believer will discover some evidences of grace, evincing his filial relation to God, but all so imperfect, that he dares not ground his expectations on them. Here the covenant of grace steps in to his relief, wherein he sees ample provision made for the security of his eternal interest. For the covenant is made with Christ and his seed. It is an everlasting covenant; not only made before time, but extending its beneficial effects through the ages of eternity. It is ordered "in all things;" therefore nothing can be wanting in it, either to promote the glory of God, or the salvation of believers. It is also "sure;" depending on no conditions, requiring nothing but what it gives, conferring its blessings freely, and making them sure to all the seed, being established upon better promises. Happy souls, who are interested in this well-ordered covenant! May it be all my salvation, and all my desire.

I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. John xiv. 16, 17.

WHEN God designed the great and glorious work of recovering fallen man, and the saving of sinners, "to the praise of the glory of his grace," he appointed, in his infinite wisdom, two great means thereof;—the one was, the giving of his Son *for* them, and the other was, the giving of his Spirit *to* them. Hereby way was made for the manifestations of the glory of the whole blessed Trinity. Hereby were made gloriously conspicuous the love, grace, and wisdom of the Father, in the design and contrivance of the whole; the love, grace, and condescension of the Son, in the execution, purchase, and procurement of grace and salvation for sinners; with the love, grace, and power of the Holy Spirit, in the effectual application of all unto the souls of men. To these heads may all the promises of God be reduced! Happy for the Church, that the Spirit is to abide with it for ever! Awful to think, that the unconverted world receiveth not the Spirit!

Holy Spirit, Heav'nly Dove,
Bringing peace and bringing love;
Take me, and possess me whole,
Form the Saviour in my soul.

Be my true and constant Guide,
In my fainting heart abide;
All the grace of God reveal,
And each precious promise seal.

Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death. 2 Cor. vii. 10.

THERE is a sorrow that is called godly, because it is produced in us by the Spirit of God discovering the evil of sin and the plague and corruption of our own hearts, and deeply humbling us under a sense of sin, producing evangelical repentance, and leading the soul to cry to the Lord Jesus Christ for pardon and salvation; the Holy Spirit, at the same time, enabling us to believe in Him, and to rest upon his person, blood, and righteousness, for redemption and salvation. This repentance will never be repented of; but sorrow, arising from the love of this world, worketh death, death eternal. Lord Jesus, grant me to feel more of this godly sorrow for sin, and to rejoice more in thee as my Saviour. Reader, would you realize this godly sorrow for sin? Go to Gethsemane and Calvary, exercise thy thoughts on a bleeding, dying Saviour, and pray the Holy Spirit to sprinkle his precious blood on thy conscience: this will break thy heart, cause thy tears to flow, and set thy whole soul against sin for ever.

Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,
Which before the cross I spend;
Life, and health, and peace possessing,
From the sinner's dying Friend.

Here I'll sit for ever, viewing
Mercy's streams in streams of blood,
Precious drops my soul bedewing,
Plead and claim my peace with God.

Lord, in ceaseless contemplation,
Fix my heart and eyes on thine,
Till I taste thy whole salvation,
Where unveil'd thy glories shine.

Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness; he is gracious, full of compassion, and righteous. Psalm cxii. 4. Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward; for ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise; for yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Heb. x. 35-37.

THIS shows that believers are subject to many changes of joy and sorrow. In a state of gladness, therefore, we have reason to fear; and in the hours of trouble and sadness, to entertain good hopes. Thus we shall be able to keep the happy medium between the extremes of levity and despair. Before a man has a true sense of his own miseries, the complaints and infirmities of the saints are often a stumbling-block; but afterwards they will administer to him great comfort. This is the reason that God has revealed them in Scripture; for the complaints of his children give more comfort than all their most heroic actions. My soul, beware of presumption, yield not to fear; but exercise steady confidence in God—believing in the dullest night that light is sown for thee, and will soon spring up before thee. Thy Jesus is thy light now, and soon will he appear as thy everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

Now let the Lord my Saviour smile,
And show my name upon his heart;
I would forget my pains a while,
And in the pleasure lose the smart.

But O! it swells my sorrows high,
To see my blessed Jesus frown;
My spirits sink, my comforts die,
And all the springs of life are down.

I find a law, that when I would do good evil is present with me.
Rom. vii. 21.

O MY soul, thou art always striving, yet sin is always stirring: thou fearest the truth of grace, because thou findest the working of sin; but it will be always thus: thou canst not come out of Egypt, but Amalek will lay wait in the way. He, therefore, that sits down, and is at rest in sin, proves that he is under the dominion of Satan, who thus keeps his kingdom in peace. But where there is any work of Christ, there will be always war with sin. Sin was the source of death, and death will be the tomb of sin. God would have my soul humbled; therefore, though he has broken my prison, yet he has left the chain upon my feet. God would have my graces exercised; therefore, though he has translated me into the kingdom of life, yet he has left the Canaanite in the land. God would have my faith manifested and invigorated; therefore Goliath still shows himself in the field, that so I might go out to him "in the name of the Lord." I will betake me to the strength of Christ; and though I cannot help the rebelling power of sin, yet, through grace, I will labour to prevent the ruling power of it.

So darkness struggles with the light,
Till perfect day arise;
Water and fire maintain the fight,
Until the weaker dies.

Thus will the flesh and spirit strive,
And vex and break my peace;
But I shall quit this mortal life,
And sin for ever cease.

God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; for he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. 2 Cor. v. 19, 21.

IT highly concerns believers who desire to keep a constant peace in their bosoms, to be ever sensible of their spiritual poverty, and to feed and rest wholly on the all-sufficient atonement and righteousness of Jesus Christ. Disquiet of mind, and spiritual slothfulness, often proceed from self-righteousness, and not looking to Christ for everything, but trusting secretly to something in ourselves. Salvation, and all the means of obtaining it, are to be sought for in Christ. None other can supply our wants, or furnish to the believer that which he needs. To him, therefore, let us apply, and in him let us confide: thus shall we become spiritual and happy; and thus will he receive from us the tribute which he deserves from all his church. Lord help me to believe that thou wilt not impute my trespasses unto me, because thou hast imputed them to Jesus, and punished them in his body on the tree. O, Jesus, I would daily, yea hourly, look to thee as made sin for me, that I may be made the righteousness of God in thee!

My Saviour's pierced side
 Pour'd out a double flood;
 By water we are purify'd,
 And pardon'd by the blood.

There, on the cursed tree,
 In dying pangs he lies,
 Fulfils his Father's great decree,
 And all our want supplies.

Nevertheless, I am continually with thee. Thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. Psalm lxxiii. 23-26. Psalm xvi. 8-11.

BABES in religion long not only for Christ, but for sensible communion with him; and very often are they indulged with it, that they may be weaned from the world. But those of fuller age, who have their senses more exercised, are thankful that they can trust him, when they do not see him, and can follow him, when they feel no comfort; relying more on the word and covenant of God than on those sensations which, though ever precious and desirable, are often withdrawn, that it may be seen whether we are so decided and eager as to follow God into a land not sown. Lord, give me grace to trust thee in the dark, to rest on thy promise, believing that thou art always present, though unseen. I would not live on frames and feelings, but on Jesus; nor fancy that my God changes because I do. I am always with thee as thy child, needing thy watchful care; and thou art always with me, as my Father, sympathizing with and caring for me.

How oft have sin and Satan strove
To rend my soul from thee, my God!
But everlasting is thy love,
And Jesus seals it with his blood.

The Gospel bears my spirits up;
A faithful and unchanging God
Lays the foundation of my Hope
In oaths, and promises, and blood.

There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God; God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved. Psalm xli. 4, 5. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. 1 John iv. 4. Psalm cx. 2. Zech. ii. 5.

TRUE Christians, in a right spirit, are still subject to temptations from within and without; but, watching unto prayer, they do not fall by them. On the contrary, as temptations are great helps to discover their hidden infirmities, and stir them up to be more cautious, serious, and faithful, they are followed and rewarded with great and glorious victories. Temptations are not indeed joyous in themselves, but are attended with good fruit and blessed effects in the faithful. Hence St. James bids us count it all joy, when we fall into divers temptations. What reason have those to be afraid of temptations, who find that every one carries a new blessing along with it? Yet we must never yield to temptation, when it comes in the form of solicitation to sin. For if we do, we grieve the Spirit, dishonour our heavenly Father, and Jesus is wounded again in the house of his friends. Such temptations are not from God, but Satan, and are to be zealously resisted in promised strength.

Jesus, Refuge of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly;
While the raging billows roll,
While the tempest still is high.

Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on thee;
Leave, O! leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me.

Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Rom. vi. 12. *Resist the devil and he will flee from you.* James iv. 7

O MY soul, how awful is thy state by nature and practice? Sin has gained a dominion over thee: its influence is universal over soul and body, and over every son and daughter of Adam; it has brought death on the body, and subjected the soul to everlasting misery; its authority is unjust, and its power cruel and destructive. Lord Jesus, let me adore thine effectual grace, that it has in any measure delivered me from its power; and assist my poor heart in opposing and rejecting every temptation to obey it in the lusts thereof; let thy precious blood effectually secure me from the guilt of sin in this life, and the punishment of it in another. O my soul, if thou art a faithful follower of Jesus, though Satan received a deadly wound when Christ was crucified for thee, yet his malice is still the same. Thou hast a thousand enemies, and the devil is the leader of them all. O may I, with the deepest humility, look to Jesus; rest upon Jesus; and derive daily strength from him to resist the devil, and, finally, to come off conqueror, and more than conqueror, through him that loved me. May I daily realize that I am not under the law, but under grace; for then sin will not, cannot, have dominion over me.

Stretch out thine arm, victorious King;
My reigning sins subdue;
Drive each usurper from the throne,
And form my soul anew.

*Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know
we him no more. 2 Cor. v. 16.*

WHAT is it to know Christ after the flesh? It is to content ourselves with carnal views of his person, character, and kingdom. This was the case with all those who followed him, not on account of his miracles and doctrines, but for the loaves and fishes. Alas! are there not too many who wish to know Christ for carnal, worldly interest, and not that they may be saved from a proud, rebellious heart, and an ungodly life? O my soul, let me see to it, that my seeking after Christ may not be carnal, but spiritual. Worldly interest is too apt, it may be feared, to influence both private professors, and even public preachers. True believers can say, that henceforth this carnal knowledge of Christ is not their pursuit. Where the Spirit of Jesus regenerates the heart, and we are brought to a spiritual and experimental knowledge of Christ, we shall love him, rejoice in him, and humbly submit to his will in all things. Blessed Saviour, grant that this may be more and more my experience, till I shall know Thee, in all thy holiness and glory, for ever and ever.

Not with our mortal eyes
Have we beheld the Lord;
Yet we rejoice to hear his name,
And love him in his word.

And when we taste thy love,
Our joys divinely grow
Unspeakable, like those above,
And heav'n begins below.

The Lord preserveih the simple; I was brought low, and he helped me. Psalm cxvi. 6.

HE who walks in godly simplicity and humility, accounting his own infirmities always the greatest, will best be preserved from being puffed up and sifted by the enemy of souls. And surely nothing should humble us more than justification by free grace. The more we consider and carefully cherish that, the more this simple, child-like, quiet temper will increase; for since there is nothing in ourselves which can be depended upon, but all must be freely received from Christ, this, at the same time cutting off all vain boasting, settles our peace in Christ, who is our All, and is firm enough to be rested upon.

It is only from thee, O my Saviour, that I can learn true simplicity. Teach me, therefore, to turn mine eyes not upon others, but upon myself; humble me to the uttermost, and fashion me after thine own mind, that I may be careful to avoid everything that is contrary to love. Keep me, O my Light, from all self-dependence and self-conceit; bridle my carnal reason, and pull down all vain imaginations. Grant that mine eye may be fixed only on that one thing needful, which lasts eternally; and that, in all my words, deeds, and gestures, I may always exemplify the simplicity, innocence, fidelity, and love of a little child. (Matt. xviii. 3.)

Oh, from the world's vile slavery,
Almighty Saviour, set me free!
And as my treasure is above,
Be there my thoughts, be there my love.

The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. Psalm xxiii. 1. I am come, that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. John x. 10, 28.

IS the Lord Jesus thy Shepherd? Has he called thee out of the wilderness; called thy heart from the love of sin and the world, and brought thee into his fold and pastures, causing thee cheerfully to attend on his ordinances? and does he feed and refresh thy soul with his word? Canst thou distinguish the Shepherd's voice from the voice of a hireling? And does thy heart cleave to the Shepherd in faith and love, adoring his person, and approving his laws, as well as admiring his doctrines? Then fear not; the Lord is with thee; Jesus is thy Shepherd; thou shalt want nothing that is really good. Follow thy Shepherd, till he bring thee to glory. Jesus, the faithful, careful Shepherd, never lost one of his sheep yet, and he never will. Keep close to him, and thou art not only safe but happy; he will not only keep thee, but feed thee with his own sweet words and gracious communications. He loves to see his sheep lying at his feet, feeding on his word, and enjoying his presence.

My Shepherd is the living Lord,
Now shall my wants be well supplied,
His providence and holy word
Become my safety and my guide.

My wand'ring feet his ways mistake,
But he restores my soul to peace,
And leads me, for his mercy's sake,
In the fair path of righteousness.

—*The everlasting gospel.* Revelation xiv. 6.

THE Gospel is properly called “glad tidings,” for these reasons:—We are polluted with the filth of sin; in it is a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness—The way to heaven is blocked up by our sins; it reveals “a new and living way through the flesh of Christ”—We are imprisoned debtors, in consequence of multiplied transgressions; it shows that a price, the most inestimable, has been paid to discharge us—We have by nature hard and impenitent hearts; in it is promised a heart of flesh—We can of ourselves do nothing; it shows, that through Christ we can do all things—We feel that we are liable to err and backslide; it declares that God will scourge us till we return to him, but not take his loving-kindness from us—We know that we are liable to many calamities; it teaches us that they shall all work together for our good—We see that we are dying creatures: by it we are assured that we have a Forerunner in heaven, and an eternal habitation with God in glory. Lord, send abroad men to publish this Gospel, and accompany it with the power of thine own blessed Spirit, that multitudes may be turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day;
And there may I, as vile as he
Wash all my sins away.

They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him.
Tit. i. 16.

THERE is a profession of a special kind, which, in its own nature, is exposed to reproach in the world: "They that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." There is a being in Christ, and not living godly; for there are branches in the vine by profession, which bring forth no fruit—men who have not in them the mind which was in Christ Jesus—that mind which is sure to awaken the opposition of a carnal world. But they that will live godly, that is, engage in a profession which shall, on all occasions and in all instances, manifest the power of it—they shall suffer persecution. We see many every day keep up a profession, but such a profession as will not provoke the world: now this is to be ashamed of the Author of it. No man can put Jesus Christ to greater shame, than by professing the Gospel without showing the power of it. (Phil. iii. 18; Tit. i. 16.) There can be no more vile and sordid hypocrisy than for any to pretend unto inward, habitual sanctification, while their lives are barren in the fruits of righteousness and obedience. Reader! of all dangers in profession, beware of a customary, traditional, or doctrinal owning of Gospel truths, without an experimental acquaintance with the reality and efficacy of them; lest, after all thy hopes and pretensions, thou shouldest have thy portion where are "weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth."

I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Gen. iii. 15.

BY the "Seed of the woman" is to be understood Christ the Saviour; not excluding his friends and followers in every age of the world. This prediction of a Saviour signified to our first parents these *four* things: 1. That the promised Saviour was to be born of a virgin. 2. That he was to be a *man*; "thou shalt bruise *his* heel." 3. That he should break the head of the serpent, or destroy his power and dominion over mankind, and punish him and all his votaries with an utter destruction. And, 4. That in order to our Saviour's doing so, he must have his own heel, or human nature, that lowest part of his mediatory person, bruised by the serpent, or persecuted and put to death by the devil and his emissaries. This was the first intimation of a Saviour, that was made to the world. It was made to the serpent, for his immediate confusion; made in the sight of heaven, that the purposes of mercy, and the glory of the Godhead, might appear complete; made in the presence of our first parents, and before their sentence was pronounced, to inspire them with the hopes of pardon and life, and with a sense of the distinguishing mercy of God, who, before he denounced so much as any temporal punishment, animated them with the hopes of eternal redemption.

The Lord, that bruised the serpent's head,
On all the serpent's seed shall tread;
The stubborn sinner's hope confound,
And smite him with a lasting wound.

The Lord do that which seemeth him good. 2 Sam. x. 12.

A CHRISTIAN has still to complain of sin in his heart. If it be asked, How can Christ and sin dwell together in one heart? the answer is, As a king and rebels in one kingdom or town. He does not agree or correspond with them; but subdues them; and inspires the heart with an assurance of complete triumph. But where self-will has the dominion, there is nothing but trouble and confusion; for unsanctified passions and a bad conscience not only are inward torments, but often occasion perplexity and damage in our worldly affairs; whereas, when Christ occupies the throne, and impresses a sense of pardoning love, we have a good conscience, abundance of peace, and can be content in the most trying outward circumstances.

Take great heed, therefore, O Christian, never to be led by thy own spirit, were it even in such things as seem to bring glory to God, if they are not of his appointment. Our hearts are sometimes very deceitfully desirous of what pleases ourselves, while we pretend to seek God's glory; and, were we not crossed in these our designs, they would prove a great burden to our life. Blessed is he who not only prays with his lips, but is heartily willing, also, that nothing but the will of the Lord should be done in everything. It is God alone that understands what may be good or dangerous to our spiritual or temporal circumstances. We are too much inclined to choose at random what would be most detrimental.

The Lord will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer. Psalm cii. 17. They looked unto him, and were lightened; and their faces were not ashamed. Psalm xxxiv. 5. See also Matt. xv. 21-28; Luke xi. 5-13; xviii. 1-8; Matt. viii. 24-27.

THE load of outward and inward affliction is not always removed soon after the utterance of supplication, however sincere. Sometimes it is requisite, after much importunity, to wait from day to day, and even to endure additional distress; how else could faith and patience be exercised? If, therefore, the trial be sharp and lasting, it is not to weaken our faith; but to stir us up to be more diligent and earnest in prayer, and the right use of the Word of God; and thus to be so much more strengthened in faith; for whatever God sends upon us, it is not for the lessening, but for the increase of our faith, and for the confirming our trust in him who, while he remembers that we are dust, makes perfect his strength in our weakness. Bear in mind, then, that delays are not denials. The Lord may make you wait, but he will not let you want. His word is true, and his faithfulness will be illustrated and confirmed in his dealings with you. Trust in him, therefore, and be not afraid. The Lord will appear.

God is the Refuge of his saints,
When storms of sharp distress invade;
Ere we can offer our complaints,
Behold him present with his aid.

Though loud the troubled ocean roar,
Our souls may yet in peace abide;
While every nation, every shore,
Trembles and dreads the swelling tide.

I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit; to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made. Isa. lvii. 15, 16.

TO insist too much upon the sensible joy of faith might make weak Christians weaker still. Many a sincere Christian's heart is like a vessel with a narrow opening, which can receive heavenly comfort only by little drops. But dost thou feel thyself quite naked, and void of all good? Christ will surely cover thee with the robe of righteousness. Go entirely out of thyself, look only on him for everything; and whatever gifts of joy, peace, and holiness, may be given thee, be very thankful for them, yet trust not in them, but in Christ alone. This will make thee confident, and will surely keep thy heart at rest. The love of God is not to be estimated by thy comforts, but by his promises, the gift of his Son, and the glorious heaven he has prepared for thee. He will give you happiness enough by and by, and until then, as your day, so will your strength be. Jesus says to his poorest, weakest, most imperfect child, "My grace is sufficient for thee."

Thus saith the high and lofty One,
I sit upon my holy throne;
My name is God! I dwell on high,
Dwell in my own eternity.

But I descend to worlds below;
On earth I have a mansion too;
The humble spirit and contrite
Is an abode of my delight.

*Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong ;
thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled. Psalm xxx. 7.*

SEE, my soul, in this verse, a picture of thine own experience ; surely thy case resembles David's. When I look up to heaven, how often do I see the sun both shine and set ! When I look down into myself, how often do I see my comforts rise and fall ! One while, I am upon Mount Tabor, and have a glance of heaven ; another while, I lie in the valley of Bochim, weeping, because I have lost sight of my heavenly country. Joshua's long day is many times turned into Paul's sad night. When God would quicken my affections, he gives me a glance of heaven, that so I may love what I see ; when I begin to bless myself, and rest in my happy privileges, he draws a veil over the bright vision, that I may rest in nothing but himself, nor loathe what I have so much reason to love. He suffers my happiness here to be imperfect, that I may be pressing on to that place where I shall be perfectly happy for ever. Lord, when thou showest thyself, let me love thee ; when my mountain stands strong, let me praise thee ; when thou withdrawest thyself, let me follow thee ; when thy countenance is hid, let me still believe that thou lovest me : under all my changes here, let my soul be always breathing, panting, longing, and reaching after thee, till I shall so perfectly enjoy thee, that I may never lose thee more. And let me rejoice that amidst all my changes, Jesus is the same, and resteth in his love to me. He is the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

*Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not. Luke xxii. 31, 32.
Yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. Amos ix. 9.
For I will keep thee from the hour of temptation. Rev. iii. 10.*

SOMETIMES we may imagine ourselves to be divinely convinced of the will of God, both by seeming outward providences, and inward persuasions of faith; meanwhile, Satan may be employing all his efforts to sift us. But let us be of good courage; the Lord will disappoint him at last, and order all things for the good of his people. May the Lord make us watchful against our own spirit, and against the evil one, especially when he is transformed into an angel of light, that it may not be in his power to sift us so as to gain an advantage over us, by our listening to his inward suggestions, or yielding to his subtle temptations.

Reader, Satan is always upon the look out to do thee an injury; watch and pray lest you enter into temptation. Look to Jesus to keep you. Cry to Jesus whenever the enemy assaults you. Cry to the strong for strength, to the wise, for wisdom; and to the Saviour, for deliverance. Jesus is thy keeper, and he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Let thy daily prayer be, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe."

The God of Abraham praise,
Whose all sufficient grace
Shall guide me through this pilgrimage
In all his ways.

He calls a worm his friend;
He calls himself my God,
And he shall save me to the end,
Through Jesus' blood.

Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing gold; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is, in the sight of God, of great price. 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4. In rest shall ye be saved, in quietness and confidence shall be your strength. Isaiah xxx. 15.

A CHRISTIAN'S best accoutrements and festival attire are called (Col. iii. 10, 12, 14) "The new man, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, and above all, charity." These are our true ornaments, and we should seek to be dressed in them. Reader! Which dost thou adorn most, body or soul? "O, thou meek and quiet Lamb of God, justly I blush before thee, when I consider my impatience and resentful feelings. I humbly beseech thee to forgive me these my transgressions, and to soften me down into a better temper. Deliver me from peevish and wrathful propensities, and grant that in all inward and outward troubles, I may prove that the same mind is in me, which was in thyself. Make me daily more and more like a lamb, that, on all occasions, grievous or joyful, I may be duly composed, and show that excellent heavenly ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, not in many words, but in reality and power. Lord, teach me so to dress, so to speak, and so to act, that I may adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour in all things."

Give me a calm and thankful heart,
From every murmur free;
The blessing of thy grace impart,
And let me live to thee.

[For February 29, occurring every fourth year, see the end of the work.]

I live by the faith of the Son of God. Gal. ii. 20.

IN spiritual things we are too often living upon self ; we seek in frames, forms, creatures, and animal life, that inward peace, and that stability of mind which are to be found only in the Redeemer. Outward duties are well in their places ; they are to be performed, but not to be trusted in ; they are as the scaffold to the building, a means for carrying on the work ; but not the work itself. When favoured with the gracious presence of our Lord, they are blessings : without it they are nothing. The whole dependence must be on Him. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life ; without Him, prayers, praises, rites, and ordinances, are carcasses without a soul. This is the case with every external service, apart from a humble dependence on the Holy Spirit, who only imparts comfort, a firm and lively faith, and a delightful view of that which is behind the veil of outward ordinances (such as no carnal eye can behold), a purely spiritual discovery of the Lord in his goodness, beauty, grandeur, and glory ! Faith, or confidence in Jesus, brings peace to the conscience, solace to the spirit, and joy to the heart. It brings in constant supplies from Jesus ; and devotes the heart, the life, and all to Jesus.

Jesus, how glorious is thy grace !
When in thy name we trust,
Our faith receives a righteousness
That makes the sinner just.

Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Matthew vii. 13, 14.

THIS sounds harsh in the ears of the old man, who would not have the law made use of in these gospel times, either to the converted or unconverted; and yet to the old man the law, and not the gospel, more especially belongs. St. Paul, the great preacher of the gospel, made use of the law to rouse unconverted Felix from his security (Acts xxiv. 25), and to warn the converted Romans from falling into it again (Rom. viii. 13).

Which way dost thou walk? Examine thyself. Is it in the narrow way? Art thou quite sure of it? Venture not to go any farther at random. It is a matter of great consequence; if thou wilt be safe, try better for it; thou mayest easily be deceived. Alas! thou art surely in the broad way to destruction, if thou still lovest and art conformed to the world. Art thou but indifferent with regard to the things of God, relishing more the vanities, pleasures, companies, treasures, and honours of this world? Thou art not in the good narrow way that leads unto life. O consider this well, and stop short, before it be too late, and thou drop into the bottomless pit of perdition. In Christ, thou art safe; but without union to Jesus, religion is but a name.

Strait is the way, the door is strait,
That leads to joys on high,
'Tis but a few that find the gate,
While crowds mistake, and die.

Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment, upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually; and thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummin. Exodus xxviii. 29, 30.

NOW am I, saith the believer, for ever in gracious remembrance with God, since my great High Priest, Christ Jesus, bears my name continually before him on his heart. Whenever I am troubled about my sins, his powerful mediation will surely obtain mercy for all my transgressions, and supply my wants abundantly. God not denying him anything, I can through him continually be heard, and obtain grace; for he makes perpetual intercession for me in heaven, by which all my prayers are sanctified, and presented to the Father, who heareth him always. Who would not rest his hope in such an Intercessor? Who would not employ such an Advocate in every time of need? O Jesus, give me faith to believe that my name is on thy heart, that my interest is in thy hands, and that thou wilt carry my cause before thy Father! Help me to leave myself, and all my concerns wholly, and for ever with thee, seeing the Father heareth thee always.

Now may our joyful tongues
Our Maker's honours sing;
Jesus, the Priest, receives our songs,
And bears them to the King.

Before his Father's eye,
Our humble suit he moves;
The Father lays his thunder by,
And looks, and smiles, and loves.

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself. Luke ix. 23.

THIS being done, all the rest will be easy. If we know that we are nothing, are unworthy of everything, and have nothing of our own, we can lose nothing. We have no property, since we are stewards of the Lord. We have no honour or shame of our own, after the manner of the world; this being our only honour, if God be glorified, and our only shame, if he be dishonoured by us. The glory of God we must have at heart, and in his cause be like lions, but in our own cause like lambs. Therefore, when we are crossed by things which do not concern the glory of God, and the real good of our neighbour, but our own interest, and are unwilling to suffer anything, we shall be involved in greater troubles; but, denying ourselves, we shall lose much needless and carnal vexation, and, instead of this, receive Christ, with all his spiritual and temporal blessings, as far as we want them, which alone can make us cheerful and happy. But whoever desires to please the world (seeking himself and his own glory), cannot be a follower of Christ. And how will it be with him in the hour of death and judgment? By this every one, learned or unlearned, may try himself—whom does he please? God, or the world? Who is sovereign of the heart—Christ, or Satan? What is the aim of thy life—holiness, or self-indulgence?

Suppress each selfish thought, that I
No more, but Christ, may live within;
My vile affections crucify,
Nor spare one darling sin.

Unto you which believe, he is precious. 1 Pet. ii. 7.

READER, put these few following questions to thine own heart, as in the presence of God ; if thou canst answer them affirmatively, doubt not thy real interest in him, and in his great salvation. Is the Lord Jesus Christ precious to me, as he is to all that believe? Once he was to me without form or comeliness, and I saw no beauty in him ; is he now to me the chiefest of ten thousands, yea, altogether lovely? Do I behold an infinite amiableness and glory in his person, a transcendent excellency in his righteousness, an inexhausted fulness in his grace, and a heaven of happiness in his love? Do I esteem him above every name, love him above every creature and thing, and value an interest in him before ten thousand worlds? Is the language of my soul, "None but Christ!" "Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee?" Is all that men admire in the world esteemed by me as nothing, when compared with the unsearchable riches of my Redeemer's grace? Do I wish nothing so ardently, seek nothing so diligently, and rejoice in nothing so greatly, as to win Christ, and be found in him? Be this my portion! I want, I wish, I ask no more!

In vain I seek for rest
In all created good;
It leaves me yet unblest,
And makes me pant for God.
And sure at rest I cannot be,
Until my heart find rest in thee.

The king's daughter is all glorious within, her clothing is of wrought gold. Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him. Psalm xlv. 13, 10, 11.

OBERVE, O my soul, though thy celestial Bridegroom finds not in thee any merit, worthiness, or beauty, he will wash thee himself with his blood; he will adorn thee, and make thee truly amiable to himself and to his Father. O sweet and eternal truth! "He has loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." Being clothed with his righteousness, we have more than angelical beauty. If we have received the Spirit of adoption, let us cleave to Christ alone, and love him above all things. This is not only our duty, but a needful evidence of our sonship. But he will not only clothe us in his righteousness, he will sanctify us by his Spirit, thus making our nature holy, as well as justifying our persons. The church of Jesus is glorious within, as well as adorned without, and our great want is, more inward holiness, or a deeper work of sanctification by the Spirit of God.

The King of saints, how fair his face,
Adorn'd with majesty and grace!
He comes with blessings from above,
And wins the nations to his love.

At his right hand our eyes behold
The queen array'd in purest gold;
The world admires her heav'nly dress,
Her robe of joy and righteousness.

He forms her beauties like his own:
He calls and seats her near his throne;
Fair stranger, let thy heart forget
The idols of thy native state.

They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts. Gal. v. 24.

ALTHOUGH the flesh be alive still, and frequently stir, yet it cannot fulfil its desires, when it is fastened to the cross. With the crucifying of the flesh we have to do as long as we live. The cross enhances the value of the Word of God; be, therefore, O my soul, always prepared to endure it. If no cross from without should present itself, thou mayest still carry on the crucifixion of thine own will, in everything that is contrary to the will of God. Painful and hard as this may seem to be at first, yet it will certainly very soon grow easier, and be matter of real joy. Blessing and peace will attend thy ways and steps; and thou shalt glorify God for having been resigned and guided, not by thine own, but by his good will and pleasure. Self-will, on the other hand, creates nothing but vexation, trouble, and uneasiness. It places the sinner in the place of God, and sets at nought the spirit of discipleship. It is punished by itself, deprives us of all real blessings, and therefore deserves to be broken and crucified in its first motions.

See from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering; but unto Cain, and to his offering, he had not respect. Gen. iv. 4, 5.

HERE are two brothers bringing each of them an oblation to the Lord. Cain, as a husbandman, brought of the produce of the ground which he cultivated; Abel, as a shepherd, some of the firstlings of his flock, with the fat of them; consequently, both believed there was a God that made the world, and was to be worshipped; and yet one was accepted, and the other rejected. Cain's sacrifice was wholly eucharistical, or a thank-offering to God, for the blessings of his providence. Abel's was not only of the eucharistic, but of the expiatory kind; and, while it was an expression of gratitude for the blessings of Providence, it was also typical of the atonement by Christ, and expressive of his hope of redemption through him. In the offering of Cain there is no confession of guilt, or reference to the promised Redeemer. In that of Abel there are both repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus God had respect to him and his offering; accepted first his person, as justified, then his offering; but neither the person nor the offering of Cain found acceptance with God. Reader, mark the difference; by this Abel speaks to thee. Art thou in a state of acceptance with God, by faith in Jesus? Is thy whole dependence, for pardon and life, on Christ crucified? Dost thou obey, from a principle of love? Then thou shalt be blessed with righteous Abel here and for ever.

On that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord. It shall be a Sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls by a statute for ever. The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood which maketh atonement for the soul. Lev. xvi. 30, 31; xvii. 11.

OUR great day of atonement is that on which Christ shed his blood for us on the cross, and thereby made atonement for us. If it was necessary for the Israelites to afflict their souls and chastise their bodies on their great day of atonement, how much more ought we to pray for humility and repentance, as the evidence of our interest in the propitiation made by Christ Jesus! And as they abstained from all labour on that day, when the High Priest alone was employed, so should we abstain from all our sinful works, and particularly from all self-sufficiency of righteousness, and seek our salvation only in the meritorious blood of atonement shed by our High Priest; for the life of our souls is in the blood of Jesus. O my Redeemer! may I, with an afflicted soul, ever seek my atonement, life, and salvation, in thy blood and death; and may I lie down and rise up in a comfortable hope that I am pardoned through thy blood, thy Spirit bearing witness of it to my conscience. Spirit of God, sprinkle the blood of Jesus on my conscience this day!

The blood of Christ for ever pleads,
To set the guilty free;
Before the throne the Saviour spreads
His hands for guilty me.

By the grace of God I am what I am. 1 Cor. xv. 10.

BE this my motto, both as to my natural and spiritual life; how else could I have existed at all? Had not foreknowledge planned, and wisdom contrived, and power put every atom together, and fixed my scene of action, I had never been here. Nor is this God of grace less to be seen in every motion of my soul towards him. Had not every spring been in him, this table on which I lean had felt as much bias towards him as I. The first check of conscience, the first thrill of fear, the first view of guilt, the first tear of penitence, were all his own; the first drawings of the Spirit, the first sight of Christ, the first dawn of hope, were all his own; every succeeding step in the path of duty, every attainment in grace, every victory over the world and sin, every evidence and token of the safety of my everlasting state, and every sweet interval of communion I have had with him, were still all his own; and the last labour of love, the last act of faith, and conquest over sin, death, and hell, together with an admission into eternal glory, must and shall be all his own—The foundation is the love of God; the superstructure is holiness, wrought by his Spirit; and the headstone shall be brought forth with shoutings, crying, “Grace, grace unto it;” and grace shall be crowned with everlasting glory. O the riches of God’s free and glorious grace!

Grace all the work shall crown,
Through everlasting days,
It lays in heav’n the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise.

The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

IF the love and power of Christ constrain us, we must needs be meditating and relying on Him and his death. This will cut off all self confidence, and lead us entirely to Him, that he may work everything in us, and through us. O Lord, may thy love on the cross fire my frozen heart also; that I may now begin to love and praise thee purely and fervently, and to offer my whole life up to thee as an entire sacrifice of love; that I may be willing to resign myself wholly into thy hands, trusting implicitly in thy Divine sovereignty and grace. Reader, thy zeal for Christ, thy love to Christ, and thy strength to do the will of Christ, will be just in proportion to thy faith in Christ. Faith realizes the love of Jesus, yields the heart to Jesus, draws supplies from Jesus, and consecrates the entire person to Jesus. The love of Christ constrains us, just in proportion as we believe and realize it.

Sing how eternal Love
 Its chief beloved chose,
 And bade him raise our wretched race
 From an abyss of woes.
 Now, sinners, dry your tears,
 Let hopeless sorrows cease;
 Bow to the sceptre of his love,
 And take the offered peace.
 Lord, we obey thy call;
 We lay an humble claim
 To the salvation thou hast brought,
 And love and praise thy name.

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest. Eccles. ix. 10.

THE business of life is to glorify God, and to work out our own salvation; all other concerns are subordinate to these: "The time is short; as the tree falleth, so it lieth:" and where death strikes down, there God lays out, either for mercy or misery. Thus we are reminded of what took place at the Red Sea; if I go in an Israelite, my landing shall be in glory, and I shall rejoice to see all mine enemies dead upon the sea-shore; but if I go in an Egyptian, if I be on this side the cloud, on this side the covenant, and go in hardened among the troops of Pharaoh, an inundation of judgment shall overflow my soul for ever. Or, I may compare death to the sleep of the ten virgins, of whom it is said, "They all slumbered and slept." We shall all fall into this sleep; if I lie down with the wise, I shall go in with the Bridegroom; but if I sleep with the foolish, without oil in my lamp, without grace in my soul, the gates of mercy will be closed upon me for ever. I see, then, that this life is the time wherein I must go forth to meet the Lord; this is the hour wherein I must do my work; and the day, wherein I must be judged according to my works, is at hand. I know not how soon I may fall into this sleep; therefore, Lord, grant that I may live every day in thy sight, as I desire to appear, the last day, in thy presence. O to die in Jesus, that I may for ever live with God!

Sin is a reproach to any people. Prov. xiv. 34.

BE not deceived, therefore, with false notions of faith. Where there is true faith, no sin has dominion. Sin will be ever stirring, often raging, and sometimes it may, for a season, prevail; but, on the whole, it cannot predominate in the heart that feels the power of faith. A believer, through a strong and sudden temptation, may be captivated by sin, but he is no willing captive; he hates sin, and prays and watches against it; and, as faith increases, his power over sin increases too. A man having no feeling of the desperate wickedness of his heart, may imagine that he has faith enough; but, being once convinced of that, he soon perceives that it is the hardest thing in the world to believe: it requires the same power by which Christ was raised from the dead. St. Paul most emphatically describes it (Eph. i. 19, 20). How then can any man think it an easy matter to believe? How can he imagine that his own power shall suffice him at his will? O the dreadful blindness and security which all the world runs into! May the Lord open their eyes! Father of Jesus, give me faith, more faith, that I may be strong in faith, giving glory to thee!

I'm like a helpless captive sold
Under the power of sin;
I cannot do the good I would,
Nor keep my conscience clean.

My God! I cry, with ev'ry breath,
For thy kind pow'r to save,
To break the yoke of sin and death,
And thus redeem the slave.

At the commandment of the Lord the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the Lord they pitched; and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents. And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the Lord, and journeyed not. Numb. ix. 18, 19.

THUS it should be with the spiritual Israelites; they ought not to undertake anything from their own will, lest confusion and disappointment should encompass every path. The unconverted are full of their own will; how should they succeed? They are bewildered here, and run into perdition eternally. Sometimes the faithful may, with a good design, when they are engaged in a good work, hurry forward, without sufficient indications of the Divine will. Herein they are reprov'd by the ancient Israelites, who journeyed not, though the cloud tarried many days, and they might imagine they were losing time on their journey. O my God! grant that in all things, even in my best works, I may be guided by thine eye, and wait for thy counsel with a resigned temper. May I speak or be silent, work or rest, when, and as thou wilt; then shall my ways be truly blest, and thou wilt never leave me nor forsake me. Give me the grace of patience, and teach me quietly to acquiesce in thy sovereign will. Be this my daily prayer, "Thy will be done."

My God! the steps of pious men
Are ordered by thy will;
Though they should fall, they rise again;
Thy hand supports them still.

In him was life, and the life was the light of men. John i. 4.

WHATEVER notional knowledge men may have of Divine truths, as they are doctrinally proposed in the Scripture, yet, if they know them not in their respect unto the person of Christ, as the foundation of the counsels of God; if they discern not how they proceed from him, and centre in him, there will be no saving spiritual light in their understandings; for all spiritual life and light are in him, and from him alone. The difference between believers and unbelievers, as to knowledge, is not so much in the matter of their knowledge, as in the manner of knowing. Some unbelievers may know more, and be able to say more, of God, his perfections, and will, than many believers; but they know nothing as they ought, nothing in a right manner, nothing spiritually and savingly, nothing with a holy, heavenly light. The excellency of a believer is not, that he has large apprehensions of things, but that what he does apprehend, (which may perhaps be very little,) he sees in the light of the Spirit of God, in a saving, soul-transforming light. And this is that which gives us communion with God, and not prying thoughts, or curious raised notions. In this knowledge, Lord, give me to increase every day, making me willing to sit at his feet, and to learn of him, as he, in his gracious love, shall see meet to teach me. Jesus, be thou my teacher, for none teacheth like thee: if thou teach me, I shall be truly wise.

We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Rom. xv. 1. Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Gal. vi. 1. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? Rom. xiv. 4.

EXTRAORDINARY quickenings and strengthenings, being often followed by particular temptations, conflicts, and sufferings, require a particular watchfulness, if we would be earnest not to provoke the Lord to visit us with sore punishments for our carelessness. Fear, therefore; rejoice with trembling; and, as a needful means to secure thyself from falling, temper thy joy with humility and gentleness towards the faults of others. Be not high-minded; say not, when thou observest the misconduct of others, "Nothing would tempt me to do as they have done;" for if God does not hold thee up himself, thou wilt surely make greater mistakes. Therefore thou hadst better not look upon others, but upon thyself; and, for fear of falling, be continually watchful in prayer. A great many would not have fallen so deep, had they been truly humble, and more charitable in judging of others. He who exalts himself above others, and does not bear with the weak, is sometimes humbled and debased under the very weakest of all. Bear, therefore, since God bears with thee. He that bears most with others, shows the greatest strength. He that sympathises most with the infirmities of others, approaches most nearly the spirit of his Master. O for the meek, the loving, the long-suffering spirit of Jesus, to conform me to his lovely image!

Thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me and guide me. Psalm xxxi. 3. They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them. I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble; for I am a father to Israel. Jer. xxxi. 9.

HE that comes in this manner, will certainly be led of God. Now, O Lord, I am blind, and heartily desire also to be directed by thee alone in all my ways, in great and also in little things. Suffer me never to follow my own spirit and natural inclinations, whatever good appearance they may have. Be pleased to cross them continually, whenever they are contrary to thy will. Often have I been deceived by false appearances already; my zeal has not always been according to knowledge; I have put natural passion in the place thereof, and thought I was contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, and have afterwards found it no better than the effects of a party spirit. Be then a Father to me, O Lord, and instruct thy waiting child in all necessary truths, and lead me in all thy righteous ways. Make me to sit down at thy feet as a little child, and seek only to know thy will. Teach me to submit to thee, and approve of all thou doest, and all thou requirest.

Thou art my Portion, O my God,
And Christ my Living Way;
Incline my heart to keep thy word,
And on thyself to stay.

I would be always wholly thine;
O save thy servant, Lord!
Thou art my Shield, my Hiding-place,
My hope is in thy word.

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. Isaiah xxvi. 3, 4. Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me. Chapter xxvii. 5.

TO enjoy an undisturbed peace, great care must be taken that we do not look and depend upon anything in ourselves, since all is but imperfect, and ever will be so. We are to trust only in the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world; to feed our souls continually in this gospel of peace; and be ever seeking him by diligent prayer, watchful, faithful, quiet, and humble; for we never lose anything of our peace, except it be stolen by pride, or other unguarded affections.

My soul, remember Jesus is thy peace. He made peace by the blood of his cross. He speaks peace to thee in his precious word. He gives thee peace by his Holy Spirit. Only by looking to Jesus, and living on Jesus, canst thou be kept in peace. When self is on the cross, and Jesus is on the throne, then, and then only, we have perfect peace.

Hence from my soul, sad thoughts, begone,
And leave me to my joys;
My tongue shall triumph in my God,
And make a joyful noise.

Darkness and doubts had veil'd my mind,
And drown'd my head in tears,
Till sov'reign grace, with shining rays,
Dispell'd my gloomy fears.

O! what immortal joys I felt,
And raptures all divine,
When Jesus told me I was His,
And my Beloved mine!

Thy Maker is thy Husband: the Lord of Hosts is his name. The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. Isaiah liv. 5; xxxv. 10.

WHEN Cyrus took the king of Armenia, and his son Tigranes, with their wives and children, prisoners, and, upon their humble submission, beyond all hope, gave them their liberty and their lives, on their returning home, when they were commending Cyrus, some for his person, some for his power, some for his clemency, Tigranes asked his wife, "What thinkest thou of Cyrus; is he not a comely man, of a majestic presence?" "Truly," said she, "I know not what manner of man he is, I never looked on him." "Why," said he, "where were thine eyes all the while; upon whom didst thou look?" "I fixed mine eyes," said she, "all the while upon him," (meaning her husband), "who, in my hearing, offered to Cyrus to lay down his life for my ransom." Thus, if any question the devout soul, once indeed captivated by the world, but now enamoured of Christ her heavenly Bridegroom, whether she is not charmed with the riches, pleasures, and gaieties of the world? her answer is, that her eyes and her heart are now fixed on a nobler object, even on him who not only made an offer, like Tigranes, to die in her stead, but actually laid down his life to ransom her. As her dear Bridegroom is now in heaven, her looks are after him, and she can esteem nothing on earth in comparison of him; and as he has promised to come again, she is looking, longing, and preparing for his coming.

Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them. I am thy part and thine inheritance.
Numbers xviii. 20.

WHOEVER loves and possesses the Lord Jesus, finds unspeakably more delight, honour, and riches in him, than in all other things. Then all is willingly denied for his sake; and this denial springs from faith. Now, O Lord, thou art the All I need to make me happy, the only Inheritance that can supply all my wants; to draw near to thee is my greatest joy. I desire to love thee evermore, and to show that love by keeping thy commandments; and I pray that a sweet sense of thy love to me may become my daily portion, and my bosom treasure. My soul, make Jesus thy portion, and as such live upon him day by day. He is thy inheritance, therefore expect little *from* the world, and little *in* the world. Having food and raiment, be therewith content. Live above the world, by living on Jesus; and triumph over the world, by faith in his dear name.

Engage this roving, treach'rous heart,
Great God! to choose the better part,
To scorn the trifles of a day,
For joys that none can take away.

Then let the wildest storms arise,
Let tempests mingle earth and skies,
No fatal shipwreck shall I fear,
But all my treasures with me bear.

If thou, my Jesus, still art nigh,
Cheerful I live, and cheerful die:
Secure, when mortal comforts flee,
To find ten thousand worlds in thee.

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what to pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us. Romans viii. 26.

“**G**OD is a Spirit; and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.” God hath many worshippers on particular occasions, who cannot be called spiritual worshippers. Take, for instance, the prayers of wicked men under their convictions, or their fears, troubles, and dangers, and compare them with the prayers of believers. The former are merely an outcry that distressed nature makes to the God of nature, considering him only as such; but the latter are the voice of the Spirit of adoption, addressing itself in the hearts of believers unto God as a Father. Woe to professors of the Gospel, who shall be seduced to believe that all they have to do with God consists in their attention to moral virtue: it is fit for *them* so to do, who, being weary of Christianity, have a mind to turn pagans: but “our fellowship is with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ,” under the promised workings and intercession of the Spirit; for by them alone are the love of the Father, and the fruits of the mediation of the Son, communicated unto us, without which we have no interest or comfort in them; and by the influences of the Spirit alone we are enabled to make any acceptable returns of obedience to God. To exclude the internal operations of the Holy Ghost, is to destroy the Gospel. Holy Spirit, daily help my infirmities, and make intercession in my soul!

Every man that striveth for the mastery, is temperate in all things; now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. 1 Cor. ix. 25. For he that overcometh shall inherit all things. Rev. xxi. 7.

TO be only almost a Christian, is to be the subject of manifold vexations; but to be a Christian altogether, makes all easy and pleasant. Such as desire to have the whole of Christ's salvation, and all that is his, must needs give themselves up to him, not only in part, but wholly, according to that fundamental and most reasonable rule, "All for all." As far as we deny him anything, we make ourselves unhappy; but the more we are resigned to him, the more we are fit to enjoy him and his blessing.

Many would sooner be persuaded to follow Christ, if it was allowed to serve him by halves, and reserve some things to themselves. But what would that profit them? Christ will not be bargained with; and nothing is more dangerous than the dividing of our hearts between him and the world, or waiting from time to time for a more convenient season. Thus you may live many years, and be neither cold nor hot; and so at last be rejected by the Lord. Consider this well, O ye double-minded and lukewarm. Christianity requires great striving, and overcometh all things, even our most favourite and darling lusts. Awake, therefore, to righteousness; spare yourselves no longer; rise above the trifles of this world; fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art called.

A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. John xiii. 34.

ALL the commandments of God are commandments of love, tending to our real good and great happiness; far from being grievous to those who have faith and love, the practice thereof is life and peace. The world may think it a grievous burden; but this is a great mistake. Sin is grievous. In hatred, envy, anger, revenge, pride, there is nothing but torment and slavery; but love produces rest and pleasure. Thus a sinner always punishes himself, and is robbed of peace and many blessings, by disobeying the commandments of God. In this new commandment he finds the spirit of the whole Decalogue—love to God, love to man, perfect love which casteth out fear. In commanding love, Jesus commands us to be like himself. He was love personified. His life was love illustrated. His heart was love's best dwelling-place. Love is holiness. Love is happiness. Holy Spirit, write this new commandment on my heart, and give me grace to carry it out in my family, in thy church, and in the world! O to love others, as Jesus loves me!

Love suffers long with patient eye,
Nor is provoked in haste:
She lets the present injury die,
And long forgets the past.

She lays her own advantage by,
To seek her neighbour's good,
So God's own Son came down to die,
And bought our lives with blood

One thing is needful. And Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her. Luke x. 42.

WE must not pretend to serve God, by only going to church, and doing other acts of outward devotion; while we are dead and cold, our religion is vain. They who, like Mary, seek grace from the words of Christ, receive the assurance of Divine approbation; and this stimulates them to fresh acts of piety and beneficence. It is almost impossible for such to go on in haughtiness, envy, hatred, and disobedience. Grace and faith will resist it, and make them lowly, gentle, willing, obedient, active, without relying on any works of their own.

He that obtains Christ, the one thing needful, receives with him all the rest, and has no more occasion to be troubled about many things; he being our All, we may always live happily; whereas the children of this world must always be cumbered and divided between fears and hopes about their fate. We shall never find this good part in the circle of fashionable pleasure, nor yet in the works of the law. Faith alone takes hold of it. Whoever withdraws his heart from the noise and bustle of this world, looking for salvation through the blood and righteousness of Christ, will certainly find there that better part which shall not be taken from him.

The one thing needful, that good part,
Which Mary chose with all her heart,
I would pursue with heart and mind,
And seek unwearied till I find.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Psalm li. 7. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Ver. 9. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Isa. i. 18. I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins; return unto me, for I have redeemed thee. Chap. xlv. 22.

WE must not keep away from Christ on account of our stumblings and manifold faults; this would cast us under the law again, and bind us under condemnation: but we should humble ourselves directly before God, and seek earnestly for pardon through the blood of Christ. The longer we delay this, the worse our case will grow; and the sooner it is done, the sooner we shall have forgiveness. The Lord not imputing those sins to us which are sincerely repented of, our soul returns to its rest again. And instead of falling into carnal security (as some may think), we shall thus strengthen our faith, and become more watchful. Hasten, therefore, and come as soon and as well as thou canst. He will receive thee, though thou advance toward him slowly, and with trembling. It is a great act of faith, to go to Jesus and confess sin as soon as it is committed, and plead with him for the pardon of it. Satan always suggests delay, and we too often listen to him, as if allowing guilt to rankle in the conscience could do any good. As soon as sin is detected, carry it at once to Jesus.

Jesus, my God, thy blood alone
Hath pow'r sufficient to atone;
Thy blood can make me white as snow;
No Jewish types could cleanse me so.

Deliver us from all evil. Matt. vi. 13. Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. Isa. xliii. 1, 2. Christ has by his own blood once entered into the holy place; having obtained eternal redemption for us. Heb. ix. 12.

THIS precious redemption is the foundation of our present deliverance, and will, finally, produce an everlasting deliverance from all evil. He who loathes and detests the evil, not only of punishment, but of sin itself, and consequently pants after Jesus, both for his love, and for his likeness, has faith already, and sin hath lost its dominion over him. Though he may be tempted very severely, yet he is under the law no more; for, the reigning power of sin being broken, the law hath lost its condemning power also; we are delivered from the power of the evil one, and we may be sure of a continual, nay, an eternal redemption. We may often feel the evil, but by prayer and watchfulness shall be as often delivered from it also. My soul, rejoice in the glorious fact that thou hast redemption in the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of thy sins: and while rejoicing in thy liberty, watch and pray, lest thou be entangled with the yoke of bondage again.

Thou hast secured my soul from death,
O set thy pris'ner free!
That heart and hand, and life and breath,
May be employed for thee.

Stir up the gift of God which is in thee. 2 Tim. i. 6.

HOW can this be done? By looking as well upon thine own great poverty and wants, as upon the riches of that grace which is in Christ for thee, and so drawing near to God through him in faith. But it is not enough to do this once for all, or now and then only. It is to be thy daily work. One day's omission may greatly injure thy soul. The morning hours are especially adapted to this purpose. These must be directly laid hold on to converse with God in prayer, before we meddle with anything else in our business, though ever so needful and important; lest we be entangled and distracted the whole day. In order to obtain the more strength, draw as near to Christ as possible, and plead with him, as if it were the last time. Pour out thy whole heart before him; not giving over too soon; be instant in thy supplications, at least with continual inward groaning, till thy heart burn within thee, and thou feel the quickening influence of his grace and Spirit. Then great care is to be taken to preserve this blessing and strength in a quiet and well-composed mind; examine thyself frequently, especially at nights, how the day has been spent. Learn what the gift of God is, and improve it as becomes the recipient of so Divine a treasure.

I'll lift my hands, I'll raise my voice,
While I have breath to pray or praise;
This work shall make my heart rejoice
And spend the remnant of my days.

For every one that useth milk, is unskilful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. Heb. v. 13.

THE apostle, with some severity of expression, tells the Hebrews, or converted Jews, to whom he wrote, that instead of being capable of strong meat, or attaining to the perfection of Christian doctrine, and being skilful in the word of righteousness, they chose to continue babes in knowledge, and, like children, had all their work to begin again. It is, therefore, a matter of the greatest importance to know what that word of righteousness is, in which they were unskilful, not having their senses exercised to discern between good and evil, truth and error. Let it only be observed, that they were looking back to the law, and consequently in danger of returning to it for justification, and thus falling from the doctrine of grace. The design of this epistle was to keep them steadfast in the faith; and it will appear, at once, that the righteousness which they were ignorant of, or ready to reject, is that of Christ, "who by one offering," the finishing act of his obedience, "hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Heb. x. 14. How many, in the present day, who have the appearance of well-grown Christians, are just such babes as the Hebrews were, and have the same need to be told that they are unskilful in the word, (the reason or ground of a justifying righteousness,) and exhorted to go on to perfection in Christian doctrine, as well as to further degrees of Christian holiness. Lord, teach me to make Jesus my Alpha and Omega; first, last, all in all!

For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power
1 Thess. i. 5.

BY the Gospel, the Son of God and divine truths are revealed *to* us; and by the Spirit they are revealed *in* us. External revelation by the Word, and internal by the Spirit, are both necessary to salvation. Though Paul was separated from his mother's womb to be called by the grace of God, yet he had not an inward revelation of Jesus Christ to his heart till he heard the external word of Christ with his ear, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Acts ix. 4. Hence, learn to prize both the outward testimony of the Word, and the inward testimony of the Spirit. The gospel is a revelation of Jesus Christ, without which we could never have known that our sins are atoned for by the blood, our persons justified by the righteousness, and our souls everlastingly saved by the work of Christ. But is this knowledge all that is necessary to salvation? No; persons may attain a notion of these things in the head, and understand somewhat of them, and yet the heart be without precious faith in Christ, and destitute of the love of Christ, and of any saving hope in him. Many have said, "Lord, Lord," and have heard Christ preach in their streets, who little expected to hear him say,— "I know not whence ye are; depart, ye workers of iniquity." Many heard the gospel preached in Thessalonica; but *they* alone were blessed, to whom it came "with power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance."

It pleased God to reveal his Son in me. Gal. i. 16.

HENCE begins spiritual life, a life proceeding from God, holding communion with God, and tending to the glory of God; the honour and happiness of our souls arise from this revealing of Christ in us. Oh, for the reviving comfort of this, while we consider it! To reveal Christ in us is to make such a clear discovery of the matchless charms and glory of his person as we never saw before; so that we choose him, love him, delight in him, and cleave to him in all his offices and characters. For, by the eye of our soul, we then behold his glory, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," on behalf of us miserable sinners; hence he is the chief Beloved of our souls. Without this revelation of Jesus Christ in us, what is all outward profession! No more than mere talk, dry formality, and heavy drudgery. O, my soul! O, my friends! let us not be content to live without a constant revelation of Christ. This makes the conscience peaceful, the heart heavenly, and the soul happy. This subdues lust, exalts the affections, makes the whole man happy in God, and creates heaven in the soul. If Christ be in the heart, all will be right and well in the life. If you believe in Christ as revealed in the word, this blessed promise is for you: "I will manifest myself unto him." John xiv. 21.

Great God! thy Scriptures will impart
The Saviour to my list'ning ear;
Yet oh, reveal him in my heart,
And let me feel his presence there.

The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin. 1 John i. 7.

WHATEVER we attempt in our own strength, under a conviction of sin, is a covering, not a cleansing; and if we die in this condition, unwashed, uncleansed, unpurified, it is utterly impossible that we should be admitted into the blessed presence of the holy God. (Rev. xxi. 27.) “Let no man deceive you with vain words.” It is not the doing of a few good works, it is not an outward profession of religion, that will give you access with joy unto God. Unless you are washed from your actual transgressions in the blood of Christ, and cleansed from the pollution of your nature by the Spirit of God, you shall not inherit the kingdom of God; yea, without this washing, you will be a horrible sight unto saints and angels, to yourselves and one another, when the shame of your nakedness shall be made to appear. If, therefore, you would not perish, and that eternally—if you would not perish as base defiled creatures, an abhorrence unto all flesh—then, when your pride and your wealth, your beauty, your ornaments, and your duties, will stand you in no stead, look out betimes after that only way of purifying and cleansing your souls, which God has ordained: “Without shedding of blood there is no remission” (Heb. ix. 22). “The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin” (1 John i. 7). “Ye were redeemed not with corruptible things; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter i. 18, 19).

I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. Gen. ix. 13.

THE rainbow is a token of the covenant of preservation made with Noah, and with all the creatures of the earth. It is fixed and sure; it may be considered also as an emblem of the covenant of grace (Isa. liv. 9, 10); or rather, it may be an emblem of Christ himself (Rev. x. 1), and that in many respects. When we are apt to fear being overwhelmed by the rain, Jehovah shows this seal of the promise that we shall not. Thus he removes our apprehensions, by reminding us of the covenant of grace established in Jesus. The thicker the cloud, the brighter is the bow in the cloud; so when afflictions abound, consolations do much more abound. The bow appears when one part of the sky is clear, which intimates mercy remembered in the midst of wrath. The rainbow is caused by the refraction of the beams of the sun; so all the glory of the covenant of grace, and the significancy of the seals, are derived from Christ, the Sun of righteousness. The bow speaks terror; but this is without string or arrow, is directed upward, and not to the earth. God looks upon the bow, to remember his covenant; so should we, that we may be mindful of the covenant of grace. Blessed covenant, ordered in all things and sure!

Christ's open arms like rainbows stand,
To grasp and save a guilty land;
Oh take me, Lord, within thy bow,
And all its glories sweetly show!

God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. Gal. vi. 14.

A TRUE believer has nothing to glory in but Christ alone. Even in his very best performances, he will be often deeply humbled, and cry out, "Lord, enter not into judgment." And well he may; for the ground of our glory, comfort, and salvation, is not in works, but in Christ, and the free grace of God; who, for his Son's sake, lays nothing to our charge, but daily covers and pardons all our iniquities. And thus believers, walking steadily, might always be kept in solid peace; for the cross of Christ is a solid and unshaken foundation. It is the only thing in which the believer may safely glory, and to which he may ever turn with unfailing confidence, as a sure refuge alike in prosperity or adversity. Cross of Jesus! be thou the subject of my meditation, the theme of my song, the joy of my heart, my plea at the throne of grace, and my comfort in the hour of death. By the cross of Jesus I conquer Satan, overcome the world, obtain pardon, enjoy peace, and hope for everlasting life. If I rest on anything, it shall be the cross; if I glory in anything, it shall be the cross.

When I survey the wondrous cross,
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the cross of Christ, my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.

Purifying their hearts by faith. Acts xv. 9.

BY faith in the Son of God we get an interest in his great and glorious salvation; we are justified by faith; we have peace with God by faith. This is an excellent grace, which brings us out of a state of slavery and sin into the liberty of the sons and daughters of God, and will issue in everlasting salvation. Faith purifies the heart of man, naturally vicious, and unites us to Christ, the root of all holiness. Now, reader, examine thyself whether thou be in the faith; try the tree by its fruits; ask thyself these questions: Has my faith a purifying influence on my heart? Does the view of Christ dying for my sins make me die unto them? Has my faith in Christ, as wounded for my transgressions, and bruised for my iniquities, made me bitterly lament them, sincerely hate them, and seek the death of every one of them? Though there may be still much sin in me, is there none allowed? Is there none, no not one (not even that sin which does most easily beset me), which I desire to be spared and excused in? Do I rather look upon all sin as the enemy of Christ and my own soul; and as such do I hate it with a perfect hatred? Am I praying fervently for Divine grace to subdue it, and, in the strength of that grace, do I maintain a constant and vigorous war with it, determined never to give it any rest in my heart, never to cease my conflict with it, till I have gained the complete and everlasting victory? Then thou art upright; go on and prosper.

He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root; Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit. Isaiah xxvii. 6. They shall bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing. Psalm xcii. 14. Her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit. Jer. xvii. 8.

TRUE Christians form a lowly estimate of their spiritual attainments; accounting themselves, comparatively, barren trees in the plantation of God. Hence, when they approach the last tribunal, they will be ready to disclaim those pretensions which even their Judge will distinctly support. Matt. xxv. 37-40. The reason is, they are poor in spirit, and are not satisfied with the fruits which they have borne; all that they were ever tempted to pronounce excellent in themselves, vanishes before the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. Grant, O Lord, that I may earnestly seek to bring forth fruit, and may grow in fruitfulness, as I grow in years, and never cease from yielding fruit; hereby proving myself to be a tree of the Lord's planting, whose leaf is green, and whose branches are flourishing and productive. Yet bless me also with deep poverty of spirit, that I may acknowledge myself still to be nothing, having nothing of my own to glory in, and thus may esteem Christ my All, and rest upon him wholly. In Jesus only would I trust, and in him only would I glory.

Laden with fruits of age, they show
The Lord is holy, just, and true;
None that attend his gates shall find
A God unfaithful or unkind.

The breaker is come up before them; they have broken up and have passed through the gate; and their King shall pass before them, and the Lord on the head of them. Mic. ii. 13. Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. John xvi. 33; Heb. xii. 1, 2.

SOMETIMES the enemy seems to get an advantage over us; but the battle is not yet over. At last, O believer, thou shalt have the victory. In hard struggles remember the power of Christ, who in his resurrection broke through every obstruction. With him thou canst also break through, and be more than conqueror. Yea, in every conflict, if thy faith be firm, thou canst be sure of victory beforehand; for faith engages Christ's power, and his power ensures victory. It is as impossible for thine enemies to keep thee always in bonds, as it was impossible that Christ could be kept in the grave, by the stone, seal, and keepers. Nay, the greater their force is, the more glorious will be the victory of Christ over them. The greater their overwhelming power to our weak nature, the more certain the triumph of the Conqueror. Jesus, who once conquered for us, will conquer in us, and thus gain everlasting renown.

Hosannah to our conqu'ring King!

All hail, incarnate Love!

Ten thousand songs and glories wait
To crown thy head above.

Thy vict'ries and thy deathless fame,

Through the wide world shall run.

And everlasting ages sing

The triumphs thou hast won.

Can two walk together, except they be agreed? Amos iii. 3.

PERSONS must be agreed in heart, in affection, in will, and in their inclinations and pursuits; or they cannot walk together in any mutual confidence and comfortable union. "What communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" 2 Cor. vi. 15. We cannot walk with Jesus, without a living union with him, a hearty love to him, and a holy delight in him; nor can he walk with us on any other principles. We cannot walk with each other, without mutual love. A living union with Jesus, cemented and sealed by his Holy Spirit, is the only bond of union and agreement between Christians, whereby they can walk together, to the honour of God and their own benefit. Alas! how much is it to be lamented, that those who, through grace, are thus united, should be so visibly shy of each other, because they differ in their lesser matters. O, my Saviour, help me to be more agreed with thee, and to walk more closely with thee, and in more real affection and love with all those who are really thine, to the praise and glory of thy grace!

May the grace of Christ our Saviour,
And the Father's boundless love,
With the Holy Spirit's favour,
Rest upon us from above!
So shall we abide in union
With each other and the Lord;
And possess, in sweet communion,
Joys which earth cannot afford.

Let your moderation be known unto all men. Phil. iv. 5. Charity edifieth. 1 Cor. viii. 1.

IF thou rebukest others, and wouldst have them to be like thee, thou oughtest to examine thyself first, whether thy rebukes flow from a blind party-zeal, impatience, and self-will, or from a true principle of love; and whether thou art also much in prayer for them, both before and after. He who lays the long-sufferings of the Son of God truly to heart, and considers how gently that heavenly Benefactor has treated him, and still treats him, like the weakest child, must needs be moderate also towards all men, and think, "If no one else would bear with others, surely I must." May the Lord give us all the right spirit of meekness, to show all lenity to our fellow-Christians!

My soul, when about to reprove others, look into thy own heart, look back to thy own life, and look up to God for special grace; then thy reproofs will be as an excellent oil, which will not break the head, though it may break the heart. Remember, it is one sinner reproofing another; a sinner, kept by unmerited grace, reproofing one, perhaps, left for a little while to himself.

Watch o'er my lips, and guard them, Lord,
From ev'ry rash and heedless word;
Nor let my feet incline to tread
The guilty path where sinners lead.

O may the righteous, when I stray,
Smite and reprove my wand'ring way;
Their gentle words, like ointment shed,
Shall never bruise, but cheer my head.

Put thou my tears into thy bottle; are they not in thy book?
 Psalm lvi. 8. *They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.* Psalm cxxvi. 5, 6.

BELIEVER, if thou art now reaping in joy, and singing hymns of triumph, be thankful; but remember that this work belongs more to the next world than the present. Here weeping and rejoicing follow each other, and sorrow will oft find a lodging in the bosom of faith; for there is no retreat from the field of battle; and thine enemies will not leave thee while thou hast a breath to draw. Let this be a check to impatience. It is indeed needful to be humbled under a sense of thy misery, so as to sigh, groan, and weep often; and this is the true seed for eternity. Not a single tear or groan will be lost. They are all in the book of the Lord. Nor is there a single unneeded sorrow, a single grief in excess, or one suffering of the believer, in which the Man of Sorrows has not borne a part. It is sweet to weep over sin, when we know it is pardoned, and it is sweet to weep in suffering, if we realize that Jesus has a fellow-feeling with us. He who never wept on earth, cannot know the blessedness intended by the Lord wiping away all tears from his people's eyes. I would weep over sin, and weep for Jesus, but for nothing else.

God counts the sorrows of his saints,
 Their groans affect his ears;
 He has a book for their complaints,
 A bottle for their tears.

The Lord hath heard my supplication; the Lord will receive my prayer. The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee; for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee. For the needy shall not alway be forgotten; the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever. Psalm vi. 9; ix. 9, 10, 18.

WHOEVER would receive comfort from these words, must first be sensible of his poverty and misery, confessing his sins, and feeling nothing in himself but helpless and unworthiness. He must come with all his poverty to a rich Saviour, and daily entreat his mercy; carefully remembering, that the Lord has promised to supply all our wants, however great our poverty and misery may be. Therefore beware of unbelief, and do not suspect the Lord's kindness, but seek to him, and hope in him, and expect all good things from him; assuring thyself, that neither thy hope nor thy prayer, nor a single sigh will be lost. The Lord supplieth all my wants, and leaveth me nothing to be desired but himself. O my God, grant me faith, that I may say, The Lord heareth my supplication, the Lord receiveth my prayer. Praised be God, who hath not rejected my prayer, nor turned away his goodness from me! Blessed be God, who hath not forgotten my needy soul, or suffered my expectation to fail, but has hitherto supplied all my needs, and still stands engaged to do so!

His thoughts are high, his love is wise,
His wounds a cure intend;
And though he doth not always smile,
He loves unto the end.

Lead us not into temptation. Matt. vi. 13. God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. 1 Cor. x. 13.

THE nearer to heaven, the higher the mountains, the deeper the valleys, and the sharper the conflicts. But be not discouraged; it is only for the trial of our faith. God gives also more strength, carries us through all, as he has done from the beginning, and suffers none to be ashamed who trust in him. Sometimes we may seem to be tempted above measure, and are afraid of being confounded; but, far from it, it is quite impossible that we should. Here thou hast the plain words of the Lord. Take hold on them, and wait his time; for since the world stood, none have been confounded in anything, who have waited for his promise. Who have ever asked of him in vain, who truly prayed in spirit? And surely he will not make thee the first instance of the failure of his word. (Isa. liv. 10.) "Rather shall the mountains depart, and the hills be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee." O to believe the promise, and rest in the faithfulness of the promiser!

Our God, how firm his promise stands,
E'en when he hides his face!
He trusts in our Redeemer's hands
His glory and his grace.

Then why, my soul, these sad complaints,
Since Christ and we are one?
Thy God is faithful to his saints,
Is faithful to his Son.

O satisfy us early with thy mercy. Psalm xc. 14. Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it. Psalm lxxxi. 10. My people shall be satisfied with my goodness. Jer. xxxi. 14. The river of God is full of water. Psalm lxxv. 9. With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. Isaiah xli. 3. In that day there shall be a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. Zech. xiii. 1.

O MY soul, keep close to the Gospel; there only wilt thou find a fulness to supply all wants; food for the hungry, and raiment for the naked soul, and everything in plenty. Whosoever will, may come, and be fed and clothed, without money and without price. Therefore let not the law hinder thee from eating and drinking, and rejoicing and adorning thyself in the manner that becomes the Gospel. The law, as one justly observes, brings in a great bill, but nothing wherewith to discharge it. It sets the soul a-working, but so as to neglect the proper nourishment necessary for it. No wonder, therefore, that she is destitute of sufficient strength; that she faints, and never comes to the right mark. There is no such thing as making amends by the law. We must go directly to Christ, and receive first the grace and strength required, out of his fulness, by faith. First receive from Christ, then work for Christ.

Dear dying Lamb! thy precious blood
 Shall never lose its power,
 Till all the ransom'd church of God
 Be saved, to sin no more.

E'er since by faith I saw the stream,
 Thy flowing wounds supply,
 Redeeming love has been my theme,
 And shall be till I die.

Fear not, daughter of Zion. John xii. 15. Rejoice greatly, and shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold thy King cometh unto thee; he is just and having salvation. Zech. ix. 9. For the Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy. The King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more. Zeph. iii. 15. Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather against thee, shall fall for thy sake. Isa. liv. 15. Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them. Jer. xv. 19.

HOW strong soever thy spiritual enemies may be now, fear not and be not discouraged. Thy King is bound by his office, love, and promise, to help thee with strength to overcome. Even the hardships of a Christian work together for his good in this world, and brighten his crown of glory in the world to come. Too often, instead of casting and leaving a burden on the Lord by faith at once, we parley with temptation, and undertake to heal ourselves by a thousand false contrivances, the effect of which is to make a conflict long that might have been short. (2 Chron. xvi. 7-9.) Lord, give me grace to be watchful, and to keep on the armour of faith, that, as I pass from conflict to conflict, I may pass on conquering and to conquer, daily pressing forward, and every hour rejoicing in Christ, my mighty King and Saviour. Gracious Redeemer, scatter my foes, fire my zeal, and make me more than a conqueror!

Arise, ye saints, and sing,
 Jesus your leader is,
 The foe before his banner flies,
 For victory is his.

Thou shalt not be afraid of them, but shall well remember what the Lord thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt. Deut. vii. 18. Be ye not terrified because of them; for the Lord your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, and to save you. Chap. xx. 3, 4. Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed. Job xxxviii. 11.

THE assaults of original sin will ever return; and we must not be surprised, when one conflict is over, that another arises. This warfare is unavoidable, for the enemy is within us. It makes us more careful and humble to know this, than we should be if we believed that we had to encounter sin only from without, and not from within. A deep acquaintance with this subject will also teach us to put a just value on the privilege of drawing nigh to God through the Redeemer, and pleading those precious promises which encourage us to hope that he will both pardon and subdue our iniquities. God is with us; this is our confidence. God is for us; this is our glory. Let us, therefore, engage with every foe, exercising faith in a present God. If Omnipotence be with us, if Omnipotence be for us, whom or what should we fear? Let us not fear or be afraid, but let us trust in the Lord.

Released from guilt, I feel no fear,
Redemption is my shield and tower;
I see my Saviour ever near,
To help in every trying hour.

Though I am weak, and Satan strong,
And often to assault me tries;
When Jesus is my strength and song
Abashed the wolf before me flies.

Verily, thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel the Saviour. Isa. xlv. 15. *All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth.* Psalm xxv. 10. *The Lord of hosts is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.* Isa. xxviii. 29.

GOD is wonderful in all his doings, and his ways often are past finding out; but, on the review of his dealings with us, we are compelled to acknowledge, that even those which once seemed the severest were the fruit of mercy. Therefore, when things take such a turn that we are quite at our wit's end, and do not know which way to go, we may believe that the hand of the Lord is in it, and that some good will arise out of it at last. Such seasons may serve to remind us of the prediction, "He shall be called Wonderful;" and to encourage the expectation that he will show himself to be our Counsellor and Mighty God also. At first everything may seem to be against us, and go quite contrary; but at last we shall see plainly, that all the disappointments of our corrupt nature were intended to produce unspeakable advantage. Though the ways of God are marvellous, they invite our study, and win the admiration of the believer the longer they are contemplated. They are capable of an explanation that will demonstrate them to be worthy of our highest praise. Wait on the Lord in the darkest season, and light will soon spring up. It is sown for the righteous.

Thy love is constant to its line,
Though clouds oft come between,
And, could my faith but pierce these clouds,
It might be always seen.

Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy. Exod. xx. 8. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day. Rev. i. 10.

READER, I know not who or what thou art: but may the God of all grace bless this meditation to thy soul. Perhaps thou art a careless sinner, who to this day hast trifled with Sabbaths. O do not profane the Lord's day any more! but, if thou hast any value for thy soul, attend upon his worship, and desire to be "in the Spirit on his day." Perhaps thou art punctual in outward services; so far is praiseworthy; but awful is thy mistake, if thou makest any outward service the ground of thy acceptance. "In the Lord alone," exclaims the enlightened believer, "have I righteousness and strength;" and so wilt thou say, if "in the Spirit."

Or thou mayest have been a splendid professor; but now a grievous backslider. If, happily, once more, thou shouldest be "in the Spirit on the Lord's day," thou wilt look to God for fresh sprinklings of the Redeemer's blood, and to the Spirit for his restoring influences.

If thou art a believer under sharp trials, mayest thou be "in the Spirit," that so, when tribulations abound, consolations may abound also. If thou art a believer, walking close with God, rich in knowledge and experience, thou wilt wish to be "in the Spirit," that grace may be magnified, Jesus more loved, and his name more honoured.

Reader, whatever thou art, if thou wishest to be "in the Spirit," and wouldst have thy temporal and spiritual concerns prosper, make conscience of keep-

Remember me, O my God, for good. Neh. xiii. 31. Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him. Jer. xxxi. 20. A book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. Mal. iii. 16. I know the thoughts which I have towards you. Jer. xxix. 11.

AS soon as I appear with my prayers before the Lord, he writes all my petitions in his book of remembrance. Should I not pray much? Yes, O Lord; and though I have many things already in thy book, yet will I give thee occasion to write down more and more every hour. Nothing can be forgotten. All will be granted by him. Delays we must expect, but all shall be made up with so much the larger gifts in due time, though the best will be reserved for a blissful eternity. God never denies, except when we ask for what would injure us, or ask from an improper motive. He loves to give. He entreats us to ask. He waits to be gracious. He never forgets. Registered prayers will soon be answered prayers; and answered prayers will fill our hearts with gratitude, and our mouths with praise.

Now let the Lord, my Saviour, smile,
And show my name upon his heart;
I would forget my pains awhile,
And in the pleasure lose the smart.

My name is printed on his breast,
His book of life contains my name;
I'd rather have it there impress'd,
Than in the bright records of fame.

And in this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees; of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. Isaiah xxv. 6.

A FEAST bespeaks plenty, harmony, and joy. Many feasts were appointed under the law, in commemoration of various deliverances and mercies. The gospel appoints one great perpetual festival, in consequence of the one grand blessing, which comprehends all other mercies—redemption by the blood of Christ. The table is always spread, the company are always welcome, the season is always pleasant, and the joy is always new. Lord, I once was feeding upon husks, upon ashes, upon the wind, and drinking down iniquity like water; but, O wonderful love! thou didst invite and bring me to thine own feast! Thou feedest me with the bread of life, and causest me to drink of the wine of thy consolation. May I never more have an appetite for the vanities of the world! My soul, hast thou an appetite for spiritual provision this morning? There is a feast prepared, the invitation is sent thee, the welcome is hearty and sincere; all that is necessary is the appetite. If thou art hungry, go feed on the bread of life; if thou art thirsty, go drink of the wine of the kingdom: go, drink and forget thy poverty, and remember thy misery no more.

Why was I made to hear thy voice,
And enter while there's room,
When thousands make a wretched choice,
And rather starve than come?

And he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness. Genesis xv. 6.

IT is no uncommon thing in Scripture to put the act for the object, especially with regard to faith and hope. Thus hope signifies the object of hope, (Jer xiv. 8 ; 1 Tim. i. 1 ; Heb. vi. 18) ; and faith is often put for the object or doctrine of faith, or that which is believed in ; as when it is said, Paul preached the faith which once he destroyed ; and Felix heard him concerning the faith of Christ ; and when the Scripture speaks of keeping, and contending for, the the faith, and holding the mystery of faith, and the like. Thus, when Abraham is said to believe in the Lord, the meaning is, he believed in the promise of God, that he should have a seed, and a very numerous one ; he believed that the Messiah would spring from his seed : he believed in him as his Saviour and Redeemer ; he believed in him for righteousness ; and he believed in his righteousness as justifying him before God. It was not the act of his faith, but the object of it ; not the promise he believed, but what was promised, and his faith received, even Christ and his righteousness. (Rom. iv. 3, 10, 22-24.)

Reader, mark well how Abraham was justified before God, and follow this example of the father of the faithful. It is by faith in Jesus Christ alone that we can be justified before God ; by faith all the Old Testament saints were justified, as well as the New : this distinguishes the Christian religion from all systems of mere morality ; and to err in this, is to err in the fundamentals of Christianity.

This do in remembrance of me. Luke xxii. 19.

COME, my soul, obey thy dying Lord's command; let it be thy delight, as it is thy privilege, to attend thy Master at his table, to take a nearer view of his bleeding love, and, by a renewed act of faith, obtain a fresh taste and renewed pledge of the precious benefits contained therein. Stagger not through unbelief: it is a blessed truth, Jesus died for sinners; this is the foundation of a sinner's hope; let this encourage thee, O my soul! Thou art a sinner guilty and defiled. The blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin. He is the Fountain opened for thine uncleanness: thou art by nature a child of wrath, condemned by the law, exposed to the curse; but Jesus was made a curse for thee: thou art unrighteous, unholy; but Jesus is made of God unto thee Righteousness and Sanctification: thou art weak, beset with enemies; his strength shall be perfected in thy weakness, and thou, by faith, shalt be more than conqueror, through Him that loved thee: thou art afraid of perishing at the last; look to Jesus, he purchased thee with his blood, he will not give thee up, none can pluck thee out of his hand.

Rise, then, O my soul, and come to the banquet of love, and partake of the blessings of the everlasting covenant; beseech the Lord to manifest his love, and seal thy pardon, renew thy strength, and enable thee to travel the remaining part of thy pilgrimage, till thou come to Mount Zion, and be admitted a welcome guest at the marriage-supper in heaven.

I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake; I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning; I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. 1 John ii. 12, 13.

GOD has saints of several degrees, and some of them have more communion with him than others. From among the multitude he chose twelve to be with him; from among the twelve he chose three, Peter, James, and John, who were of the privy council; from among the three he chose out John, as his bosom-favourite, of whom it is said five times in St. John's gospel, that "he was the disciple whom Jesus loved." So now, at this day, God has his "babes," who live upon milk; he has "children" also, who know their Father, and are assured of his love; moreover, he has his "young men," who go out to war, and fight the Lord's battles victoriously; and he has "fathers" in Israel, who abound in grey-headed experience and wisdom; for they knew him from the beginning, and they remember his words. It is a great mercy to be one of God's "little ones," yea, the least of all; to be a star, though not of the first magnitude; to be a disciple, though not a John; not one of the three, nor one of the twelve, nor one of the seventy. It is a mercy to be new-born, to be taken into the family of God, and household of faith. But to grow up to a perfect stature, to be a man in Christ Jesus,—O how great a mercy! Lord, thou knowest my desires; perfect that which concerns thy servant that I may rise to be a father in Christ!

Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering. Gen. xxii. 2.

A BRAHAM desired earnestly to see into the mystery of redemption ; and God, in order to affect his mind most sensibly with the intenseness of Divine love, as beaming forth from that mystery, in the surrender and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, caused Abraham to feel, by anticipation, what it was to lose a beloved son : “ Take now thy son, thine only son, thine Isaac, the staff of thine age, the hope of thy family ; (none else do I require ;) and offer him up for a burnt-offering. In this transaction, see my love to sinners, when I shall give up mine only Son Jesus a sacrifice for them. Abraham obeyed, he virtually sacrificed his son ; a ram was substituted in his place, and blessings are poured upon the faithful patriarch. In the whole narrative, we have a lively type of greater things. We have seen the day when God spared not his own Son, when he was bound with cords, when he bore his cross, and on this mountain was offered up an offering for sin ; when he rose again, to live for evermore ; and saw his seed, even his redeemed people, whom no man can number, and whose possessions are the glories of heaven and eternity.

Gracious Saviour, help me to be faithful, to keep back nothing from thee ; when thou hast tried me, crown the faith thou hast bestowed with the unfading glory thou hast promised to them that are faithful unto death. Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift !

God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved,) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Eph. ii. 4-6.

CHRIST being the Head of the body, his church, all who are his real members are, together with him, dead, buried, raised up, and seated in heavenly places; for he is the new Adam, and hath done all these things as our representative, in our stead, and for our good. Therefore, a true believer may rejoice, and say, "I have suffered in thee, O my glorious Head, for all my sins already; I am discharged, I have no punishment to fear any more, respecting the guilt and curse of sin! Thou hast fully answered the charge against me; thou hast satisfied the infinite justice of God for me; and God is faithful and just to forgive me my sins, and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness. Consequently, I die no more since thou canst die no more; nay, I live already, and have my place with thee eternally in heaven, since the head will not, cannot, part even with the weakest of his members, but influence and draw them after him, whithersoever he goeth.

He by Himself hath sworn;
 I on his oath depend;
 I shall, on eagles' wings upborne,
 To heaven ascend;
 I shall behold his face,
 I shall his power adore,
 And sing the wonders of his grace
 For evermore.

He made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. 2 Cor. v. 21. To him, that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Rom. iv. 5.

THESE are very sweet and precious words to those who look upon their own best virtues and performances by nature as sinful, and upon their best condition by grace as extremely weak and imperfect. How comfortable a thing is the justification of the penitent by faith, when the soul is first stript quite naked before God, and thoroughly convinced of its wickedness and weakness ! A mere moral man does not meddle with this ; he pretends to make amends for his former sins by altering his course, and doing better works ; but this is not making amends at all, since we are but unprofitable servants, and want continually forgiveness of sin, even when we have done all. There is but one way to be justified, and to obtain and preserve the blessing of a good conscience, which is, by humbling ourselves, confessing that we are guilty, and looking only for forgiveness and righteousness in Christ. Thus we are made, by him, the righteousness of God itself. How marvellous is the gift ! how wondrous the change on the poor sinner ! May the Lord put us all in this way, to the praise of the glory of his grace, accepting us in the Beloved !

The best obedience of my hands
Dares not appear before thy throne ;
But faith can answer thy demands,
By pleading what my Lord has done.

Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.
Acts v. 31.

SAY not, What reason have I for repentance? I am no murderer or robber. Thou art both. By thy sins thou hast murdered the Son of God, and by thy pride robbed God of his due service; therefore, if thy heart be not changed into a new one, repair at once to the throne of grace. It may be, that Jesus Christ is even now awakening thee from the sleep of sin, and about to bestow on thee repentance. He will, assuredly, change thy heart, and make thee a new man, if thou canst yield up thyself unto him. But thou must not delay, nor must thy yielding be a reluctant or an imperfect thing. He stands at the door and knocks, saying, "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him." (Rev. iii. 20.) He is knocking now, but if you delay, if you refuse to admit him, remember there is *a last knock*, after which he will go away. Invite him in. Beseech him to take full possession. Make a full surrender of thy heart, of thy whole person, to him. He will give thee repentance for thy sins, faith in his blood, and the sweet assurance of everlasting salvation.

He who for men their surety stood,
And pour'd on earth his precious blood,
Pursues in heav'n his mighty plan,
The Saviour and the friend of man.

Though now ascended up on high,
He bends on earth a brother's eye:
Partaker of the human name,
He knows the frailty of our frame.

God is not the author of confusion. 1 Cor. xiv. 33. He hath made everything beautiful in his time. Also no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end. Eccles. iii. 11.

O LORD, I am like a little child, knowing neither the beginning nor end of my ways; but thou being a wonderful Counsellor, I think it my only wisdom to be advised and ruled by thee. O show me then always thy way in all things, even in the least; that I may never fail to do thy work in due season and due order. Make me such a faithful steward, as not to go one inch from thy will; but, on all occasions, to act and suffer according to thy good pleasure, to follow thee in implicit obedience, seeking only to know thy will, and striving only to do it.

My soul, take thy place at the feet of Jesus, and learn of him. He will be thy teacher. He will instruct thee with discretion. If he teach thee, his teaching will sanctify thee, mould thee into the will of God, and make thee happy. It will make thee willing to be ignorant of what God conceals, and practically to improve what God reveals. No teacher like Jesus, nor is there any teaching like his!

God moves in a mysterious way,

His wonders to perform:

He plants his footsteps in the sea,

And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines,

Of never-failing skill,

He treasures up his bright designs,

And works his sov'reign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,

The clouds ye so much dread

Are big with mercy, and shall break

Now he who established us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. 2 Cor. I. 21, 22; Eph. i. 14.

A SENSIBLE joy of faith, and great delight in prayer, are not the only evidences of the earnest and sealing of the Spirit. The former are sometimes wanting, when we have reason to believe we are sealed by these marks; namely, when we receive Christ in all his offices, and have a sincere desire to do the will of God in all things; when we love the ordinances of Christ, and regard the children of God with a brotherly affection, and seek to do them good; when we hate sin, and watch and pray against it; and, lastly, when we are poor in spirit, vile in our own eyes, and are led into further acquaintance with Christ himself, and with his Gospel, by the Spirit. These are constant marks, even for the weakest. With them, none need doubt; without them, hope is false, and altogether vain. But, however much we may have obtained, there is much more in Christ to be received. His grace will sink us in the depths of humility, and raise us to the heights of holiness. His grace will crush our fears, destroy our doubts, and fill us with confidence. O, Jesus, give us more grace, more grace! He giveth grace to the humble.

Why should the children of a King
Go mourning all their days?
Great Comforter, descend and bring
Some tokens of thy grace.

Assure my conscience of her part
In the Redeemer's blood;
And bear thy witness with my heart,
That I am born of God

God be merciful to me a sinner. Luke xviii. 13. *Look upon my affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins.* Psalm xxv. 18. *The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion, and of great mercy. The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.* Psalm cxlv. 8, 9. *Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.* Matt. ix. 2.

JUSTIFICATION, or remission of sins before the tribunal of God, and the comfortable assurance of it in the heart, do not always go together. The pardon is passed in heaven at once, and in the most perfect manner, yet the sense of it may be wanting; for the assurance of that pardon is mostly given by degrees, as believers are able to receive it. Feeble glimpses appear now and then; and many tokens usually pass between Christ and a believing soul, before the Spirit gives a full and clear witness to his conscience. Therefore a penitent soul must converse much with the Gospel, and pray continually for more light, and a greater degree of faith and peace. As our faith is, so is our assurance; for assurance is the flower of faith. But as some flowers do not blossom the first summer, so the faith of some Christians does not soon rise to full assurance. There is often the faith that saves, when there is not the faith that assures. Seek, therefore, a greater degree of faith; cry with the disciples, "Lord, increase my faith!" Cry on, cry often, until faith is strong and steady.

O God of mercy, hear my call,
My load of guilt remove;
Break down this separating wall,
That bars me from my love.

Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Psalm xxxvii. 4.

IF thou desirest to delight thyself only in the Lord, and art more solicitous for the increase of faith, love, and holiness, than temporal happiness, and wouldest even part with some earthly good, provided it would enlarge thy spiritual welfare, this comes not from nature, but is an infallible mark of grace and regeneration: and the Lord shall give thee also the desires of thine heart, and even more than thou desirest.

Nothing can be more foolish than to harbour one or more secret lusts in our hearts, after we have been once awakened. We must certainly suffer for it; our conscience will check us; we cannot enjoy it with half the pleasure as before; our course is hindered, and our peace disturbed. How much more prudent and profitable, then, would it be, to forsake all, and follow Christ, who only can satisfy the desires of our heart! Consider this, O my soul; act the wiser part; let thine eye be single, and cleave to him alone; while others, seeking to serve two masters, God and mammon, are wofully disappointed at last, avoid thou this folly, and be wholly for Christ. Thus thou wilt be able to taste the crystal streams of his heavenly love. Only the true-hearted are really happy.

How vain are all things here below!
How false, and yet how fair!
Each pleasure has its poison too,
And ev'ry sweet a snare.

Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed. Jer. xvii. 14. *I am the Lord that healeth thee.* Exod. xv. 26. *They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.* Matt. ix. 12. *I have seen his ways, and will heal him.* Isa. lvii. 18; xliii. 3; and xli. 1. *He healed all that were sick.* Matt. viii. 15-17.

CHRIST'S healing all bodily sickness was a token of his power and grace to heal all spiritual diseases, though ever so desperate and dangerous. Therefore give thyself only up to his cure; he understands thy distemper, and will certainly restore thee. He has healed a great many already, nay, all those who ever desired it, of all their infirmities. Thou canst never be too miserable for him; he is ever willing and able to help. The worse thy case is, the more he will pity thee, and have patience. Before we can be made whole, his way is to make us thoroughly sensible of our sickness, and lay our wounds more and more open. But as the physician then is most wanted, we must be the more earnest to implore his help; and he will surely bind us up again, and heal us; not at once, but by degrees, often slowly, yet, at last, completely; he will heal all our diseases (Psalm ciii. 3). Lord Jesus, I put myself into thy hands, to be healed by thee. My worst disease is unbelief. O cure me of this, and make me strong in faith, giving glory to God! Fill me with love and zeal, that so, believing thy word, loving thy person, I may zealously do thy will.

Lord, why is this? I trembling cried;

Wilt thou pursue thy worm to death?

"'Tis in this way," the Lord replied,

"I answer prayer for grace and faith."

Confess your faults one to another. James v. 16.

IT is related of St. John the Evangelist, that being upon his return from Patmos to Ephesus, after the death of Domitian, he was set upon by a company of thieves, among whom was a young man, their captain; to whom St. John applied himself, by way of wholesome counsel and advice; which took so good effect, that he became a new man, and was converted, and went thereupon to all his fellow-thieves, and besought them, in the name of Jesus Christ, that they would walk no longer in their former wicked ways. He told them withal, that he was troubled in conscience, and earnestly entreated them that they would now leave off their old courses. The counsel was good, and well taken, so that many of those great robbers became great converts. Thus it is that one sinner's confession of his faults to another may happily prove the means of his conversion. Hence the meaning of that precept, "Confess your faults one to another," is thus interpreted by some: That he, for example, who has been a drunkard, should go to his companions in iniquity, and tell them that he is troubled in mind; and perhaps he may be a means of converting them. Reader! art thou a converted man? Follow this method; go to thy old companions; warn them of their danger; and thou wilt either be a means of converting them, or hereby wilt get rid of their troublesome company in future. Again, he who has injured another, should confess his fault to him, as well as to God, and beg forgiveness from both.

Lord, enter not into judgment with thy servant. Psalm cxliii. 2.
Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life. John v. 24; viii. 51. Isaiah xxv. 8.

SINCE the Judge himself is our Brother, our Bridegroom, the Lord of death and life, yea, even our life, believers cannot die eternally, because they are passed from death unto life. He that owns the justice of God's judgment, confesses himself guilty in all things, and appeals from the judgment-seat to the mercy-seat; him the Lord will own and justify through the righteousness of his Son. For "if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged;" nay, we should even sit in judgment together with Christ (1 Cor. vi. 2); and surely, in that day, we shall not pass a sentence of condemnation on ourselves, though owning ourselves worthy of the deepest condemnation, but for this imputed righteousness, which is all our hope; and much less will Christ, for he loves us more than we do ourselves. My soul, sit in judgment on thyself every day, and afresh exercise faith in the finished work of Christ. This is the way to maintain peace, sustain confidence, and secure the victory. Daily dealings with Jesus, will give us daily triumphs.

Who shall the Lord's elect condemn?

'Tis God that justifies their souls;
 And mercy, like a mighty stream,
 O'er all their souls divinely rolls.

Who shall adjudge the saints to hell?

'Tis Christ that suffered in their stead!
 And, their salvation to fulfil,
 Behold him rising from the dead.

Give heed to me, Lord. Jer. xviii. 19. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. Psalm cxxi. 4. Casting all your care upon God, for he careth for you. 1 Peter v. 7.

THE care of the Lord, which he takes for his little ones, infinitely exceeds the care of the most tender mother over her weak and helpless child. Then, while I feel and own myself weak, foolish, and wretched, the Lord being the guardian of such babes, he will have patience with me. Knowing myself, therefore, to be always a weak and ignorant child, I will labour to keep close to Jesus, in waiting and prayer. And, since he is the Minister of the sanctuary, he will never let me want anything that is good for me; but will defend me, and feed me, and train me up in the best and most suitable manner. Gracious Saviour, give me grace to believe the testimony borne to thee in thy holy Word, and enable me daily, yea, hourly, to come to thee for all I need. I would live believing thy love to me, thy care of me, and thy readiness to do me good. O that I could trust thee always, rest in thee at all times, and rejoice in thy finished work! Thou art not only what I want, but all I want. Glory, glory, to thy most holy name!

Fierce passions discompose the mind,
As tempests lash the sea;
But calm content and peace we find,
When, Lord, we turn to thee.

Since at his feet I've prayed to wait,
And all his will to bear;
Contented with my present state,
I cast on Him my care.

They said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world. John iv. 42. If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. 1 Peter ii. 3.

IT is an important thing to know, assuredly, that the Scripture has such a witness as experience, and that there is a real correspondence between the saints and the Word, between the believer and Christ. What an empty thing would religion be, without a heart-felt knowledge of its truth! Experience is the sure and secret mark whereby the Christian knows that the Scripture is of God, and feels his own interest in Christ: he has been often raised from the depths of gloom by the application of the Word to his heart. O what an excellent interpreter is experience! Thus the serious Christian obtains a view of the Scripture and spiritual things, which the most piercing eye of unsanctified schoolmen cannot teach. (Psalm xxxiv. 8, and cxvi. 10; 2 Tim. i. 12; Gal. ii. 16; Heb. iv. 3.)

This cannot be found in books; men will not meet with it in a throng of the choicest notions; it confounds the wise and disputer of this world; while the most simple Christian understands it well, to the satisfaction of his soul.

Reader, press after experience; live not by hearsay, and upon the comforts of others, but entreat the Lord to give thee this inward testimony; it will help thee in future trials; it will remove many of thy fears, and make thy passage through life easy and comfortable.

Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me; for whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. Mark viii. 34, 35; Luke ix. 23. Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. Luke xiv. 33.

THIS doctrine is discarded by all who call Christ "Lord, Lord," but do not the things which he saith. The language of their hearts is, "Speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits." (Isaiah xxx. 10.) How different was that of the apostle! "So fight I; not as one that beateth the air; but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." (1 Cor. ix. 26, 27.) No cross, no crown. Let us not, then, be afraid of the cross; for, when we bear it, it bears us; and when we refuse to take it up, we refuse the staff of every Christian pilgrim, and the weapon of every Christian soldier; we renounce the tree of life for that of vain knowledge, and practically deny Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Our life should be an imitation of the life of Christ. He is our exemplar. We must carry his cross, tread in his steps, breathe his spirit, and then we shall wear his crown. The way Jesus went is our way, the end Jesus aimed at is our end, and the home of Jesus will be our home.

Is there a thing beneath the sun
That strives with thee my heart to share?
Ah! tear it thence, and reign alone,
The Lord of every motion there.

What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. Mark xi. 24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. John xvi. 23, 24. But ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea; let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. James i. 6, 7.

HEROD promised, with an oath, to give the daughter of Herodias whatsoever she would ask, even to the half of his kingdom. How advantageous was his promise! But how much more so that of the Lord! "By myself have I sworn," says he, "that, in blessing, I will bless thee." (Gen. xxii. 16, 17.) When he bids us ask, he does not lay us under a restriction of not asking above half a kingdom. No; we may ask a whole kingdom, even the kingdom of heaven, consisting both of grace and glory. Both are purchased for us by the blood of the Lamb; both promised to believers in the word of the Gospel; and both actually bestowed; grace upon praying souls in the church militant; glory upon praising souls in the church triumphant. If now we do not enjoy the kingdom of grace, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, it is merely because we have not asked, or have asked amiss; that is, without faith, or in our own name, and not in the all-prevailing name of Jesus. Spirit of prayer, dwell in my heart!

O for a strong and lasting faith,
To credit what th' Almighty saith;
T' embrace the message of his Son,
And call the joys of heav'n our own!

*O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great. Psalm xxv. 11.
Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. Rom. v. 20
For God will abundantly pardon. Isaiah lv. 7.*

IT is all one with God to forgive a repenting sinner his trespasses, whether great or small, many or few; for they are all atoned for with one ransom. No sin, properly speaking, is little in itself; and none is greater than the grace of God, and the infinite price laid down for it. Whatever sins, therefore, a man feels, yet he may throw himself upon the abounding grace of God. This grace must also be our comfort, to depend upon alone, even when it is best with us; for then only it is best with us when we depend alone on grace, and live in it, as in our element. Grace brings salvation, purifies our nature, and makes us fit for heaven. It begins, it carries on, and will complete our restoration to God's image. Grace can do anything for a sinner, because it acts freely; and a sinner may expect anything from grace, because it seeks only its own glory. If sin is a river, grace is an ocean; and the river is not more swallowed up in the ocean, than are the sins of a believer swallowed up in grace. O my soul, admire, adore, and rejoice in free and sovereign grace!

What though your numerous sins exceed
The stars that fill the skies,
And, aiming at th' eternal throne,
Like pointed mountains rise!

See, here an endless ocean flows
Of never-failing grace;
Behold a dying Saviour's veins,
The sacred flood increase!

Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak. Psalm vi. 2. And strengthen me with strength in my soul. Psalm cxxxviii. 3. My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. 2 Cor. xii. 9. The Lord delighteth not in the strength of a horse, he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man. The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy. Psalm cxlvii. 10, 11. The Lord will give strength unto his people. Psalm xxix. 11.

IN whatever part we are weak, and most beset by corrupted nature, we may yet be strong enough, through grace, to come off conquerors. Therefore hope against hope, and despair not of overcoming by the power of God, be thy corruptions within and thine enemies without ever so strong and obstinate. I am weak indeed, but Christ is strong; I am poor, he is rich; I am sick, he is the Physician; I am a sinner, he is the Saviour of sinners; consequently he suits me, and I suit him. But let me look to him daily, seek his face earnestly, and obtain grace to help in every time of need. He giveth liberally, and upbraideth not. The strength of Jesus is for his people; in this they have wrought, in this they have fought, and in this they have all arrived safe at home. O Jesus, teach me to live upon thee for strength, and in every conflict, in every trial, in the hour of death, do thou strengthen me, help me, and uphold me!

Let me but hear my Saviour say,
 "Strength shall be equal to thy day;"
 Then I rejoice in deep distress,
 Leaning on all-sufficient grace.

I glory in infirmity,
 That Christ's own pow'r may rest on me;
 When I am weak, then I am strong;
 Grace is my shield, and Christ my song.

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word. Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. Remove from me the way of lying, and grant me thy law graciously. I have chosen the way of truth; thy judgments have I laid before me. Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end.
 Psalm cxix. 9, 18, 29, 30, 33.

NEITHER the old nor the young can walk uprightly, without taking heed to the Word of God; if they depart from that, they soon fall into error and vicious courses; but if they would make the Word their rule, they must read it carefully, and pray diligently for the aid of the Holy Spirit. If David considered his eyes as shut, how much more should we consider ours so, and pray, "Open thou mine eyes." He who does not fervently pray thus, is still blind; even though he should think himself a profound divine, and be so esteemed by others. Lord, give me to see the wonders both of thy law and gospel; and turn my feet from every crooked path. Let thy commandments be always before me as my guide, and enable me to choose the narrow path of truth, and steadfastly walk in it to the end: this was David's request throughout this long Psalm. Make it mine, O Lord, and imbue me with the spirit of David, and of David's Lord. Be thou my teacher; keep me at thy feet as a learner, and make me wise, useful, and exemplary.

How shall the young secure their hearts,
 And guard their lives from sin?
 Thy word the choicest rules imparts
 To keep the conscience clean.

Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies. Psalm xxvii. 11. Teach me thy way, O Lord. I will walk in thy truth; unite my heart to fear thy name. Psalm lxxxvi. 11. Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will he teach sinners in the way. What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose. Psalm xxv. 8, 12

O LORD, be pleased to fulfil this gracious promise in me also. Thou hast inclined my heart to do thy will, and yet I am often in darkness about thy will. Here it is written, "Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will he teach sinners in the way." It is thine own word; I may depend upon it, and would plead it with Thee; many times thou hast fulfilled this promise already, and thou art willing and able to do it evermore. Thou art ever mindful of thy word, and I would keep close unto it. Then let thy Spirit well explain thy word, and write it on my heart, enabling me to understand, to love, and to practise it, giving to me a spirit of perfect faith and implicit obedience and conformity to thy will. My soul, daily seek Divine teaching; no one teaches like the Holy Spirit, and on some subjects, no one can teach to purpose but Him. He not only reveals the truth to the eye, but applies it to the heart, and enables us to carry it out in our lives.

I lift my soul to God,
 My trust is in his name,
 Let not my foes that seek my blood,
 Still triumph in my shame.
 Sin and the pow'rs of hell
 Persuade me to despair;
 Lord, let me know thy cov'nant well,
 That I may 'scape the snare.

Turn again our captivity, O Lord. Psalm cxxvi. 4. He hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. Isa. lxi. 1. Thus saith the Lord, I will give thee for a covenant to the people, that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves; they shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be all in high places, they shall not hunger nor thirst. Isaiah xlix. 8-10. See also chap. xxxv. 10.

O LORD, I am hungering after the righteousness and freedom, not only of faith, but of holiness also; not that I may make holiness the foundation of hope, but the evidence of faith; and that I may be able to rejoice, and take the comfort of thy righteousness alone, without deceiving my soul; that a sense of my nothingness and my emptiness may be ever present, that so I may be filled with all the fulness of Christ. Grant, therefore, that I may be truly filled, and may be strong, easy, and free, so as to be kept no longer in the bonds of pride, unbelief, an upbraiding conscience, or a worldly heart. May I rejoice in Christ Jesus, as formed in me the hope of glory, as well as sacrificed for me, to make atonement for my sins. O to be enabled to say with Paul, from heartfelt experience, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life that I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Poor helpless worms in thee possess
Grace, wisdom, pow'r, and righteousness;
Thou art our mighty ALL—and we
Give our whole selves, O Lord, to thee.

How long wilt thou hide thy face from me, O Lord? Psalm xiii. 1.
For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee; for this is as the waters of Noah unto me; for as I have sworn, that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn, that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. Isaiah liv. 7-9.

WHEN the Lord is pleased to quicken us in our prayers with a lively impression of one or more promises, we are apt to think that the hour of his help is come. But afterwards, it may be, he not only hides himself for a great while again, but things take such a strange and contrary course, as if all had been nothing, or as if nothing was more uncertain than the word of God; nay, even God himself. But Christians must then be prudently upon their guard, not without the pleasing expectation, that God is going to do some glorious things for them; for, if they be first more convinced of their utter unworthiness; if they act with faith and patience, and be more earnest in prayers, they will afterwards receive more abundant favour. Yet God, as a Sovereign, will give such measures of consolation, at such seasons, and to such persons, as he pleases. And the only right spirit of the believer is that of humble submission to his will. Lord, give me grace to acquiesce in thy wise, holy, and loving will, always, and in all places.

How boundless is our Father's grace,
In height, in depth, in length!
He made his Son our righteousness,
His Spirit is our strength.

How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? Psal. xiii. 1. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me. Isa. xlix. 15, 16. I will not leave you comfortless. John xiv. 18.

WERE all our sins and afflictions so soon to be prayed away with a few words, whence these sad and repeated complaints of David? Why should God advise us to wait for him, and persevere in hope? And how could faith and patience be exercised? In our closets we may be lifted up with high speculations; seem to be strong, and able to leap over all the walls; but in great distress we see how dejected and distrusting our hearts often are, (Psalm xxx. 7, 8,) but faith is the true confidence, and weakness the surest claim to strength; for the Lord preserves us; he is our strength and our shield. My soul, seek the assurance of the Lord's love, and having obtained this, remember, Jesus never forsakes or forgets his own. We often turn from him, he never turns from us; he is faithful, though we are fickle. Yea, "though we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself." Precious Lord Jesus, help me to rejoice in thy unchangeable love, amidst all the changes that I experience below!

Can a woman's tender care
Cease towards the child she bare?
Yes, she may forgetful be,
Yet will I remember thee

Mine is an unchanging love,
Higher than the heights above;
Deeper than the depths beneath,
Free and faithful, strong as death.

Show me thy ways, O Lord, and teach me thy paths. Psalm xxv. 4.

Show me now thy way, that I may know thee. Exod. xxxiii. 13.

I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go:

I will guide thee with mine eye. Psalm xxxii. 8. My presence

shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. Exodus xxxiii. 14.

O LORD, suffer me not to step aside in the least from thy way, much less to fall away from thee, the true supporter of my soul, by the folly of my own imagination. May I never run, before thou hast called me, to the hurt of my soul; but constantly and confidently abide in thee, always drawing the necessary light and strength from thee by never-ceasing supplications. Grant that, mine eye being fixed continually upon thee, I may be guided into all truth, my doings be attended with thy blessings, and my whole life be a constant progress towards heaven.

CHRIST'S ANSWER.

“I will keep thee as the apple of mine eye, that no evil shall come near thee. As a careful mother watches over her child, so have I undertaken to teach thee my path, and guide thee with mine own eyes. Whatever faintings and failings may befall thee, yet will I be ever faithful, raising thee up again, and leading thee evermore in my ways. Nay, as a good shepherd, I will carry thee in my own arms, whenever thine increasing weakness shall require.”

My honour is engaged to save

The meanest of my sheep;

All that my heavenly Father gave,

My hands sincerely keep.

As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word that they may grow thereby. 1 Peter ii. 2.

NEW-BORN babes must not self-conceitedly be desirous of high things and strong meat. Such is not the way by which they are to grow in grace, and advance from strength to strength. Such have more need experimentally to understand the first oracles of Christ, and taste the milk and saving power of the Gospel. This would best make them grow in grace, and wean them from the world. A sucking child esteems nothing else in comparison of its mother's breast; and those that delight more in lofty imaginations than the Bible, do not proceed in a right spirit, and will therefore find it necessary to retrace their steps, and learn over again the first principles of religion. The nearer Christians approach their end, and desire to be duly prepared for heaven, the more they walk in deep humility and godly simplicity, placing themselves on the lowest bench of weak and little children. Thus they become the fittest vessels of grace; they will certainly be enlightened, and have the mystery of Christ revealed in their hearts. (Matt. xi. 25.) The lower we lie before God, the more we receive from him, and the more we become like him.

Father, 'tis thus, because thy will
Chose and ordained it should be so;
'Tis thy delight t' abase the proud,
And lay the haughty scorner low,
To bring the humble to thy feet,
And make them for thy presence meet.

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened, &c. Eph. iii. 14-21.

THIS is a prayer fit to be used by ministers for their congregations, and by all Christians for themselves; it may be used as a daily prayer; we should offer it up in faith, without apprehending that the favour we ask is too great. God will do exceedingly more for us than we can either ask or understand. Whatever we ask, he will grant us still more; for, though we are sinners, Jesus has received gifts even for sinners, and to every one of us (verse 7) is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ, that we may enjoy all things richly, Christ being rich towards all them that call upon him. O God, thou art our Father, reconciled to us in Christ; grant us therefore power, great power, according to the riches of thy glory, not according to the narrowness of our hearts. We stand in need of great power, for we have great enemies; strengthen us by thy Spirit in the inner man. Lord Jesus, do thou dwell in our hearts, and grant us to be rooted in thy love, that we may know it more and more, that it may be shed abroad in our hearts, that we may be enabled to manifest its fruit in our lives, and that we may be filled with all the fulness of God. Thou art able to do exceeding and abundantly above all that I can ask or think, work therefore in me all the good pleasure of thy goodness, and the work of faith with power.

Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee. Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear. Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments. Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart. Psalm cxix. 11, 38, and verses 6, 32, 49.

THE comforts of the Gospel sweetly and powerfully urge us to obedience, and the terrors of the law warn us against resting on that obedience. Both therefore are needful. Whoever despises or neglects obedience entertains a false notion of the Gospel, and is running headlong into licentiousness and ruin. And he who relies on his obedience to justify him, defeats the design of the Gospel, and frustrates the grace of God, making it of no effect. May the Lord lead and keep us in the right way. May he be our guide and our shield, our comforter and our great reward. May we rest simply and alone on the finished work of Jesus for our acceptance with God; and then assiduously attend to all the precepts of his holy Word, to his glory. Before God, we will have to do with nothing but Christ; but before men, we will endeavour to live soberly, righteously, and godly: that, by our good works, they may glorify our Father who is in heaven.

Laden with guilt, and full of fears,
I fly to thee, my Lord;
And not a glimpse of hope appears,
But in thy written word.

O may thy counsels, mighty God,
My roving feet command;
Nor I forsake the happy road,
That leads to thy right hand.

Through the law, I am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.
Gal. ii. 19, 20.

CHRIST being our Head, in whom all fulness dwells, he will certainly fill all his members with life and strength, according to his promise, John xiv. 19, "I live, and ye shall live also;" and chap. xvii. 3, "This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." To know Christ, and God in Christ, is true light and life; he that has this, has enough. O the excellency of the knowledge of Christ! Lord, teach me to know thee as the Bridegroom of my soul, that the law may not rush into my conscience, now thy bride-chamber, and condemn me any more. I desire to be devoted to thee alone. (Rom. vii. 4.) Grant, therefore, that my whole heart and life, all my words and actions, may be governed only by a living faith on thee, who hast loved me, and given thyself for me. Holy Spirit, reveal Christ to me, and in me, more clearly, and more fully, that I may glory in his name!

Come, dearest Lord, descend and dwell
By faith and love in every breast;
Then shall we know, and taste, and feel
The joys that cannot be express'd.

Come, fill our hearts with inward strength,
Make our enlarged souls possess
And learn the height, and breadth, and length
Of thine unmeasurable grace.

I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me. Psalm cix. 22. I know thy poverty; but thou art rich. Rev. ii. 9. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Matt. v. 3. The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek him; your heart shall live for ever. Psalm xxii. 26. The Lord healeth the broken in heart; the Lord lifteth up the meek. Psalm cxlvii. 3, 6. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. Matt. xii. 20.

SUCH are the tender mercies of Christ towards the weakest of his people, that he supplies them from time to time with all strength, till at last they are able to gain a complete victory. As soon, therefore, as we are sensible of our poverty, or miserable condition, and are desirous of grace and strength to overcome sin, evidencing that desire to be sincere by constant prayer, we have actually some grace and spiritual life, and are delivered already from the jaws of hell; for there is no such feeling in dead souls; and in hell there is only a desire to be delivered from the punishment of sin, but not from sin itself. My soul, bless God for quickening grace, which makes thee feel thy need; and then seek satisfying grace, even the water which Jesus giveth, which shall be in thee a well of living water, springing up into everlasting life.

Bless'd are the humble souls that see
 Their emptiness and poverty;
 Treasures of grace to them are giv'n,
 And crowns of joy laid up in heav'n.

Bless'd are the men of broken heart,
 Who mourn for sin with inward smart,
 The blood of Christ divinely flows,
 A healing balm for all their woes.

I am the Light of the world; he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. John viii. 12. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. Chap. xii. 35.

HE that is faithful, keeping ever close to Christ and his light, strictly watching and obeying the motions of his Spirit, will be always tender in conscience, and will receive proportionable measures of light; consequently he will be from time to time more deeply rooted in repentance, faith, and assurance, so as either to be preserved from many combats and disorders, or, at least, to be carried sooner through the same. He may meet with dark valleys in his pilgrimage (for nature is covered with darkness, and grace sometimes only glimmers like a spark); yet by degrees it will blaze, and at last break through and enlighten all our darkness. The day will dawn and the shadows flee away before the Sun of Righteousness. My soul, keep thine eye fixed on Jesus, as the light of the world. Walk closely with Jesus by faith, in holy fellowship. This will preserve thee from darkness, depression, despondency, and despair; this will fill thee with joy, peace, confidence, and love.

Is he a Sun? His beams are grace;
His course is joy and righteousness;
Nations rejoice when he appears,
To chase the clouds, and dry their tears.

Nor earth, nor seas, nor sun, nor stars,
Nor heav'n his full resemblance bears
His beauties we can never trace,
Till we behold him face to face.

I am the Lord thy God, which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go. O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! Then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea. Isa. xlviii. 17, 18. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. Rev. iii. 20.

HOW often and how variously does the Lord knock at the door of our hearts; by the voice of his Word, of his Spirit, or of conscience! But how seldom are we inclined to give him the hearing! We are often so distracted with business or pleasure, that we can hardly observe his voice, amidst the hurry and noise of worldly things; and we are not at home when he knocks, and seeks to take up his abode with us. Even now he is knocking. Harken to his voice, and open the door for him directly, since he desires nothing from us that is unreasonable, but intends to make our heart a glorious residence and banqueting-room of love, fill it with heavenly treasure, and give us everything along with himself. He never comes empty-handed, but brings with him the very blessings that we need. We only find the room; he furnishes the feast, and invites us to sup with him. O how sweet to sup with Jesus, and to hear him say, "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O my beloved!"

I'll bring him to my mother's home;
Nor does my Lord refuse to come
To Zion's sacred chambers, where
My soul first drew the vital air.

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Abide in me, and I in you; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. John xv. 1-5.

O LORD, I trust that this word will have its accomplishment in me also, though as yet I have great reason to be humbled on account of my barrenness. Grant, therefore, that I may always abide in thee faithfully and quietly; since there is everything in thy power, and nothing can be done by my own strength, but as it is thy will, and it tends both to the glory of thy Father and thine own. I depend upon being replenished, in due season, with fruits of righteousness. O suffer nothing in me which may dishonour thy name, and which would prove hurtful to myself, and offensive to others. But whatever thou judgest fit for me to suffer, let it work for my real good!

How can I sufficiently adore the patience of the Lord, my gracious Husbandman, who still bears with me, the weakest of all his branches. He has not cut me off yet, but still employs means to make me more fruitful, though I have yielded little else but wild grapes. Why then shouldest thou murmur, O my soul, at the application of his pruning-knife? It is really for thy good. He is angry only with the degenerate, unfruitful branches. The more thou art pruned, the more fruit thou shalt bring forth, and the more fruit, the more is thy heavenly Father glorified. O for grace to glorify God, by bringing forth much fruit!

I am glorified in them; I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.—John xvii. 10, 26, 23.

O GLORIOUS promise! How could he love us more! What blessed and intimate union is this! O for such a faith as could always truly believe it! Christ is the Vine, believers are the branches; he the Bridegroom, they the bride; he the Head, they the members of his body, of his very flesh and bones, and consequently, one body with him. And who ever hated his own flesh? In loving and cherishing believers, he loves himself, (Eph. v. 28, 29.) Whenever he shall cease to love himself, then, and no sooner, will he cease to cherish them also. It is his own delight to do them good, more than the mother's to protect and nourish her child. He is ours and we are his; one with him; dear to him as the apple of his eye. Having loved his own that is in the world, he loveth them unto the end. Having once brought us into union with himself, he will preserve the union. Thus he glorifies himself in us, performing in us all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power. O Jesus, reveal thy Father's name to me more fully, and more powerfully!

Lord what a heaven of saving grace
Shines through the beauties of thy face,
And lights our passions to a flame!
Lord, how we love thy charming name!
Send comforts down from thy right hand
While we pass through this barren land,
And in thy temple let us see
A glimpse of love, a glimpse of thee.

Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. Matt. xi. 28, 29.

HERE Christ is commending his own meekness, both as a pattern for imitation, and as an encouragement for heavy-laden sinners to draw near to him with confidence. Rest is promised, not for the merit of our labour and humility, but merely for our coming to him, and believing in him. He says, "Take my yoke upon you." "But how shall I take it?" says the sinner. "Learn of me," says the Saviour. "Let me be your Teacher; and though you are blind and foolish, fretful and forgetful, yea, wholly polluted with sin, I can yet bear with you, because I am meek and lowly in heart; not rough and haughty to offenders, as Pharisees usually are, but full of compassion towards them, willing to receive them, and ready to forgive and comfort them." Come therefore, to him, O sinner, with all thy loads of sin and misery: he will in no wise cast thee out, but receive thee gladly.

Bless'd is the man, whose shoulders take
My yoke, and bear it with delight;
My yoke is easy to his neck,
My grace shall make the burden light.

Jesus, we come at thy command;
With faith, and hope, and humble zeal,
Resign our spirits to thy hand,
To mould and guide us at thy will.

The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Psalm xxiii. 1-3.

HE that is wise in his own conceit, as philosophers usually are, does not pray, like David, to be sought after and healed by Jesus Christ; and therefore he continues, amidst all his boasted wisdom, deeply ignorant of his fallen nature and his ruined state. But, as thou hast given me, O thou good Shepherd, to understand my lost and helpless condition; and that, like a wandering sheep, I can neither find myself when lost, nor advise myself how to return; I beseech thee to seek, heal, lead, feed, carry, and strengthen me also, as my various necessities require; that I may be able to say with David, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want." My soul, look to Jesus this day in this sweet character. View him as thy kind, careful, and watchful Shepherd. Lie at his feet, or walk by his side. He will lead thee into rich and pleasant pastures, even his own holy Word; he will conduct thee to the clear still waters, even his Holy Spirit. There is no want in following Jesus, want comes from wandering from him.

My Shepherd will supply my need,
Jehovah is his name;
In pastures fresh he makes me feed
Beside the living stream.

He brings my wand'ring spirit back,
When I forsake his ways;
And leads me, for his mercy's sake,
In paths of truth and grace.

I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast showed unto thy servant. Gen. xxxii. 10. Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? 2 Sam. vii. 18.

A SOUL truly humbled highly esteems every favour, and judges itself utterly unworthy of the least, looking upon everything as a free gift, and bestowed only for Jesus Christ's sake. Now, O my Father, in myself I certainly deserve none, no, not the least of thy mercies; but as thou hast graciously looked upon me, and given me thine only Son, who hath purchased all blessing at a high price for sinners, I do believe that goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life. Be it so, holy Father, to thy glory, and my everlasting joy. My soul, seek humbling grace from Jesus, so shalt thou be prepared to receive great things from Jesus. He resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. Look back also, and trace out the Lord's dealings with thee, and mark how goodness and mercy have followed thee all the days of thy life; observe what returns thou hast made him for his innumerable blessings, and thou wilt soon feel as Jacob felt, and exclaim as he exclaimed, "I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies."

Not for our duties or deserts,
But of his own abounding grace,
He works salvation in our hearts,
And forms a people for his praise.

'Twas his own purpose that began
To rescue rebels doom'd to die;
He gave us grace in Christ his Son,
Before he spread the starry sky.

I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed, by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.
Rom. xii. 1, 2.

THE presenting of our bodies a living sacrifice unto God, when attended with serious prayer, and reading the Scriptures, is the best means of knowing the will of God. To neglect this, and use other means, is tempting God, and exposing ourselves to the temptations and siftings of the wicked one. We may think ourselves to be divinely convinced by faith of the will of God, though we follow our own imaginations, and spoil the best of our actions. Self-will generally takes quick resolutions, and has a great deal of assurance; whereas, God very often leads his people by a way which they know not, and takes methods quite different from those which they would have adopted. "He that believeth shall not make haste," (Isa. xxviii. 16.) Let every one be careful that he does not mistake self-will and plausible representations for Divine convictions and assurances of faith; and strictly examine himself first, whether his body, soul, will, and affections, are entirely offered up to the good-will and pleasure of God; for God requires the service of the whole man, even a sacrificing of our whole selves to him at all times, not only at church, but in all other places. My God and Father, conform me to thy will, fill me with thy own love, and make a correct representation of thine own Son!

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness; as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels. Isaiah lxi. 10.

IN vain dost thou adorn thyself, O my soul, before thou approachest Christ. To him thou must come, not glorying in thy presumed comeliness, but expecting all thine attire and dignity from him. The very best of our robes need to be washed in the blood of Christ, (Rev. vii. 14); and it is by faith in his atonement and righteousness that the holiest of men are justified before his heavenly Father. The fruits of this faith are manifested in the renouncement of all self-righteousness, in the spirit of love, of humility, and unceasing prayer, wherein we find evidences that our names are written in heaven. Spirit of God! reveal this glorious righteousness of Jesus more clearly to me, and put it more sensibly in me, that I may joy and rejoice in it. To realize that all Jesus did is mine, and that all he suffered he suffered for me, will fill me with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. Righteousness of Jesus! I will wear no other robe when I appear before God; I will trust in no other work, when I seek justification at God's bar.

Awake, my heart; arise, my tongue,
Prepare a tuneful voice;
In God, the life of all my joys,
Aloud will I rejoice.

'Tis he adorn'd my naked soul,
And made salvation mine;
Upon a poor polluted worm
He makes his grace to shine.

I have sinned against the Lord. The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. 2 Sam. xii. 13. For, if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 1 Cor. xi. 31.

HE that with unfeigned repentance accuses and judges himself, placing no dependance on works of righteousness which he may have done, but looking to the mercy of God through his dear Son, may expect to receive forgiveness of all his sins at once, though chastisement may follow. For pardons are not bestowed in various measures, as spiritual gifts are. God, through Christ, receives the whole person of a penitent sinner into his favour, forgiving both original and actual sins in one instant; so that either none or all are forgiven. But though repentance is needful to humble a sinner, and to bring him to Christ, yet no sins are forgiven on account of this repentance; but through faith alone in the blood of Christ. This it is that the purifications of the ceremonial law were designed to typify. This fountain washes away the guilt of all sins, though ever so numerous and heinous. For it is written, "The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John i. 7.) And, "God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Ephes. iv. 32.)

Show pity, Lord! O Lord, forgive!
 Let a repenting rebel live!
 Are not thy mercies large and free?
 May not a sinner trust in thee?

My lips with shame my sins confess,
 Against thy law, against thy grace,
 Lord, should thy judgment grow severe,
 I am condemn'd, but thou art clear.

Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart, who, being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.
Eph. iv. 18, 19.

IF a man be naturally dead, though the sun shine in his face, he sees not its splendour, nor feels its warmth. Offer him rich presents, he receives them not; he has no eye to see them, no heart to desire them, no hand to grasp them. Thus it is with one that is spiritually dead; let the sunshine of the gospel blaze out ever so clearly, he sees it not, because he is in darkness; though he live under plentiful means, and rich dispensations, yet he is blind and poor; offer him the rich pearls of the gospel, the rich treasures of grace in Christ Jesus, yet he has no heart to them, no hand of faith to lay hold upon them; so blind, stupid, and senseless is he, that, though these rich treasures, these graces, these pearls of the gospel, be conveyed unto him in earthen vessels, in a plain and familiar manner, yet he does not, he cannot apprehend them; judgments do not affright him, and mercies cannot allure and persuade him: in the mean time, this creature is all life in the element of sin; he loves it, he pleads for it, he commits it with greediness. This is St. Paul's account of the unconverted Gentiles; and how many such have we under a Christian name! O Lord, exert thy great power, and quicken all that are thus dead in trespasses and sins. Carry on also thy work in my heart, that I may be holy in word and deed.

I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait. Psalm cxxx. 5. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint. Isa. xl. 31. For the Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. Lam. iii. 25.

WHEN we have prayed, we must remember to wait also; for this is well pleasing to the Lord, and expressly commanded by him. The more we wait, and the more instant we are in prayer, so much more will he give. Nay, he always hears, and grants our petitions directly, though he often lays up the enjoyment of the answer till his infinite wisdom determine that the fittest time is arrived. Therefore, we may confidently say, Such and such gifts I shall have, since I have prayed for them; they are actually laid up for me; and the use and benefit thereof I shall reap in due season, especially in death and in eternity. There are two rules by which we may judge if God will give us anything. The first is, Is it promised in his Word? The second is, Will it really do me good? And the second is included in the first, for God has promised us every good thing. But if a really good thing would become food for our lusts, or a snare to our souls, our God will withhold it, until we are prepared to receive it without injury. Therefore, if it tarry, wait for it, for there is mercy even in delays.

My spirit looks to God alone,
My rock and refuge is his throne;
In all my fears, in all my straits,
My soul on his salvation waits.

In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul. Psalm xciv. 19. See also 2 Cor. i. 3-5.

A CONVERTED man, without afflictions, is ready to place his trust, and seek his comforts, in temporal things. Earthly desires crowd upon him, filling his soul with vanity; and he cannot well taste the sweet comforts of God's word, but under the burden of the cross. Here we often enjoy more solid rest than if we were without a cross: and then Jesus Christ verifies his declaration, (Matt. xi. 30,) "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Thus our hearts are set against the world, reconciled to heavenly things, and easily separated from many idols which we could not forsake before. Well then may we bear these salutary burdens, which, when sanctified, will produce present comfort, and soon issue in eternal rest and glory. And, since the Lord has promised to give strength sufficient for the day, that we may not be tempted above measure, there is abundant reason to acknowledge that his burden is light indeed, that his grace is sufficient for us, and his strength perfected in our weakness. Blessed promise, "As thy day, so shall thy strength be!"

'Tis good for me to wear the yoke,
For pride is apt to rise and swell,
'Tis good to bear my Father's stroke,
That I might learn his statutes well.

Father, I bless thy gentle hand:
How kind is thy chastising rod,
That forc'd my conscience to a stand,
And brought my wand'ring soul to God!

I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 1 Cor. ii. 2. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Psalm cxi. 10. The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated; full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. James iii. 17. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. 1 Cor. viii. 1.

CHRIST crucified, and he alone, is the Power and Wisdom of God; all Christians, and especially divines, should make it their particular practice to study it well. Were our faith built on human wisdom, then surely the shrewdest philosophers would be the greatest believers, whereas they are sometimes the worst infidels. The wisdom which is from above delights to dwell with the lowly and babes, who pray for it earnestly. (Prov. xi. 2; Matt. xi. 25.) What would all knowledge avail us, then, without the knowledge of Christ! One spark of pure love yields more power than all the stores of empty human learning. May the Lord Jesus shed his love abroad in my heart; him have I determined to know, and him only; the knowledge of his love, as exemplified on the cross, I account my greatest wisdom and glory. Jesus! Jesus is my all in all in life, and shall be my all in all in death!

Grace, wisdom, justice, join'd and wrought
The wonders of that day!
No mortal tongue nor mortal thought
Can equal thanks repay.

Our hymns should sound like those above,
Could we our voices raise;
Yet, Lord, our hearts should all be love,
And all our lives be praise.

I will not let thee go except thou bless me. Gen. xxxii. 26. Forsake me not, O Lord, my God. Psalm xxxviii. 21. Behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. Gen. xxviii. 15. I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. Exod. xxxiii. 12. I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. Heb. xiii. 5.

GOD will have me to be faithful; and will not he be so himself? Am I to trust in his word? Then surely he will not forsake me, but graciously fulfil his word. Heaven and earth must pass away, but his word will not. He is ever faithful. If I do not believe this, I derogate from the character of God, and can have no help or comfort from his word; but if I truly believe him to be faithful, I believe enough. This is what he requires; and, if I really comply, my faith will not be moved, even in the hottest trials; the Word will hold me up, though I receive it even in weakness. But my faith must be constant, undivided, unmixed with self-righteousness; it must be attended with continual prayer. My God, send thy Holy Spirit to work this faith in me. Let me not be faithless, but believing. Help me to take up these precious promises and appropriate them; having done so, plead them at thy throne, and fully expect their fulfilment. May I never doubt thy veracity, or question thy faithfulness; but rather say with Job, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

Tell of his wondrous faithfulness,
And sound his power abroad;
Sing the sweet promise of his grace,
And the performing God.

I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. Matt. xii. 36. See also Eph. iv. 29; v. 4.

HERE all corrupt communication, jesting, foolish talking, and whatever is not convenient and good to the use of edifying, are plainly forbidden. But who truly believes the purport and the truth of these awful words? Surely the world does not believe them at all: this is quite plain, from that very common and shocking practice of reviling, lying, swearing, jesting, and talking all manner of filthiness. Even religious people do not sufficiently believe and consider these important subjects. How many heedless, slanderous, idle, and unprofitable words do they occasionally utter! Be therefore, careful, O my reader, to weigh every word, and to make light of none, for such will increase thine account. Whenever thou art going to speak, let the question be first, Is it needful to speak? Does it tend to the glory of God? Will it profit me or others? O Lord, grant that never an idle word may drop from my lips. Whenever I am to converse with others, give me grace first to converse with thee by secret prayer. In all companies let thy presence be before mine eyes; let me always look upon thee as the chief person in the place, and receive direction when and what I am to speak. May thy good Spirit always teach me, and sanctify all my thoughts and words. O for grace to honour Jesus by every thought, every word, and every act! O to keep the great day, and the white throne always in view!

Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.

1 Cor. vii. 20.

MOST of the employments of life are, in their own nature, lawful; and all those that are so, may be made a substantial part of our duty to God, if we engage in them only so far, and for such ends, as are suitable to beings that are to live above the world. This is the only measure of our application to any worldly business: it must have no more of our hands, our hearts, or our time, than is consistent with a hearty, daily, careful preparation of ourselves for another life. For, since all true Christians have renounced this world, to prepare themselves, by daily devotion and universal holiness, for an eternal state of quite another nature, they must look upon worldly employments as upon worldly wants and bodily infirmities,—things not to be desired, but merely to be endured till death and the resurrection have carried us to an eternal state of real happiness. A person's being called into the kingdom of grace, is not designed to make void the duties that arise from his peculiar calling or situation in life, but to enforce the practice of them in such a way as may be most to the glory of God. He must be no less diligent in business than fervent in spirit. He, therefore, that does not consider the things of this life as of little moment, or even nothing, in comparison of the things that are eternal, cannot be said either to feel or believe the greatest truths of Christianity; yet, he that doth not provide for his own house, is worse than an infidel.

And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down; and the haughtiness of men shall be made low; and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. Isaiah ii. 17.

“**P**RIDE,” says the son of Sirach, “was not made for man.” “Every one,” says Solomon, “that is proud in heart, is an abomination to the Lord.” Yet what is more common than pride and self-righteousness among the fallen children of Adam? So deeply are they ingrafted in our corrupt natures, that nothing short of Almighty grace can root them up.

It is the great design and effect of the blessed Gospel, wherever it is applied to the heart by the Spirit of God, to mortify these fatal evils. In that day the haughtiness of man (his self-will, which he set up in opposition to the will of God) shall be brought down; and his self-righteousness, by which he thought to recommend himself to the favour of God, shall be made low; and Christ, and his righteousness alone, shall be exalted.

Has this precious promise ever been fulfilled in thy experience, O my soul? Is the will of God thy rule? Is the righteousness of Christ thy hope? And is the language of thy heart and life, Let God in all things be exalted in me and by me, through Christ Jesus? Without this, O my soul, thy profession is vain, thy faith is also vain, and thou art yet in thy sins. Thou hast exalted thyself in the place of thy Lord, and thy righteousness and thy confidence are founded on the sand; and so sure as this is the case, the Lord will have a controversy with thee, and bring thee down.

I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. 1 Chron. xxix. 17. *He is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.* Prov. ii. 7. *The Lord looketh on the heart.* 1 Sam. xvi. 7

AS God searches the heart and tries the reins, he cannot be deceived by outward form; we ought not therefore to deceive ourselves in this particular. It is no certain proof of a real conversion to God, if we renounce merely the grosser sins of our former lives, much less if we abstain from such things only as by nature we are not so much inclined to indulge; but, if our hearts are so renewed by the grace of the Holy Spirit as to be firmly and habitually opposed to our most beloved lusts, we have a good evidence of a real conversion. The Lord and all his upright followers attack, first, and with the greatest ardour, these inward enemies. But if we would thus effectually prosecute the holy war, we must look with an unwearied eye to the Captain of our salvation, believing that he is both able and willing to succour us, and to ensure complete and everlasting triumph. Lord, make me upright! May I stand before God, just in Jesus: and walk before men, in sincerity and simplicity. Keep me from duplicity and every species of hypocrisy. To that end, give me a rooted hatred to all sin, steady faith in the word and work of Jesus, and habitual concern for thy glory and praise.

'Tis faith that changes all the heart;
'Tis faith that works by love;
That bids all sinful joys depart,
And lifts the thoughts above.

I will hedge up her way with thorns, and make a wall that she shall not find her paths; and she shall follow after her lovers, but shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, and not find them; then shall she say, I will go and return unto my first husband, for then was it better with me than now. Hosea ii. 6, 7.

AS it is only with thee, O my Saviour, that I can be happy, I would never leave thee any more: sooner than that I should depart from thee, under whatever plausible pretences, let my way be hedged up, and let thorns grow all around me. Let me quickly discover and crucify everything which would intercept the manifestations of thy love, or diminish mine. Never would I take one step out of the way which thou frequentest, lest I bring on myself guilt and trouble. As for the cross which thou imposest, I will cheerfully bear it, and even bless thee for the burden.

Glory be to thee, that thou hast not given me up yet, and suffered me to run into destruction in my own ways. Be pleased to restrain me still; and whenever I am in danger of wandering into the broad way, let me find no rest till I am brought back, though it be through the briers of affliction. Keep me at the feet of Jesus, whatever is necessary to do so.

I know thy judgments, Lord, are right,
Though they may seem severe;
The sharpest sufferings I endure
Flow from thy faithful care.

Before I knew thy chastening rod,
My feet were apt to stray;
But now I learn to keep thy word,
Nor wander from thy way.

And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am.
Gen. xxvii. 24.

THERE are certainly some circumstances in this affair, which may help a little to excuse Jacob and his mother, but cannot justify them. The case may be thus stated: It cannot be denied, on the one hand, that both Jacob and his mother were justly to be praised for having a due esteem of his father's solemn blessing, and for their endeavouring to attain it; since this must have proceeded from a full persuasion of the truth of God's covenant with Abraham. Thus, from the consideration of the goodness of the end, and from Jacob's title to the blessing, as accompanying the birth-right, as also from the fore-appointment of God, together with Isaac's ratification of the blessing, when done, may be drawn some arguments to lessen their crime. On the other hand, it must be confessed that the means used to attain their ends were highly criminal. Rebecca was wrong in her advice to her son, and he was wrong in following it; for, though God, before he was born, designed him to inherit the blessing, yet he ought to have waited until the Divine Wisdom opened the way, and not have anticipated God, and procured the blessing by an irregular act of his own. Besides, both of them, by this act, presumed to limit the power of God, by thinking that fraud was needful to accomplish God's purpose. Oh! that we may be taught from this to repose our all implicitly in his hands, and to walk in holy simplicity and sincerity before him.

—*Lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*
Hebrews iii. 13.

DOES sin present itself? Turn away from it with loathing and prayer. Give it not a look, lest it ensnare thee. If thou committest sin, and diest without repentance, thy soul is lost, and thy redemption ceases for ever; or, if thou committest sin, and dost repent, yet expect the hidings of God's face, and what David referred to, when he speaks of the bones which God had broken. Oh! what bitter pangs, what painful throes, what shadows of death, what terrors of hell, may sieze upon thee, before thou canst regain thy peace, or settle thine assurance! Wilt thou give way to sin, because it is delightful, or because it is pardonable? Who loves poison because it is sweet? Or who drinks poison because he may have an antidote? I have a precious soul; shall I lose it for a lust? I have a gracious God; shall I risk his favour for a sin? Lord, give me grace to resist sin; give me victory over it; let me always reject that for the indulgence of which I am sure to lose my peace, and endanger the loss of my immortal soul. O to look at sin as the abominable thing which God hates!

Sin has a thousand treach'rous arts
 To practise on the mind;
 With flattering looks she tempts our hearts,
 But leaves a sting behind.

With names of virtue she deceives
 The aged and the young;
 And while the heedless wretch believes,
 She makes his fetters strong.

This is he that came by water and blood; even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood, and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is Truth. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself. And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life. 1 John v. 6, 10—12.

JESUS came with water and blood; not with water alone, to sanctify us, but also with his blood, to make atonement for our sins. We should, therefore, first of all, penitently seek and obtain remission of sins in his blood; then may we hope to obtain the water of life, the Holy Ghost, for our inward purification. And his Holy Spirit will bear witness within us, that the Gospel is truth, and that God will fulfil his word by giving us everlasting life, as he has promised. We have three witnesses of it in heaven, and three on earth. And, if we believe in Christ, we have this true testimony in ourselves; and may therefore assuredly know, that "having the Son of God, we have life, eternal life; for he is" (according to verse 20) "life eternal;" consequently, being in him, we are already entered into everlasting life. All the blessings included in eternal life are in Jesus; consequently to possess Jesus, is to possess eternal life. Have I Christ formed in my heart? If so, I have eternal life abiding in me.

Rock of ages, cleft for me!
 Let me hide myself in Thee;
 Let the water and the blood,
 From thy riven side which flowed,
 Be of sin the double cure,
 Cleanse me from its guilt and power.

And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man, which is in heaven. John iii. 13.

NO mere man whatsoever has entered, or can enter, into the secrets of God's heart, in heaven, relating to the great mysteries of salvation, so as immediately and perfectly to understand them, and make them known to others; but this privilege is peculiar to the Messiah, who is spoken of under the character of "the Son of Man," (Psalm lxxx. 17; and Daniel vii. 13), and always had an existence in heaven as the Son of God; who came from thence in an incarnate state, that he might reveal God's counsels to men. As many are perplexed about the divinity of Christ, the following note may help them to conceive of that matter more properly: The divine and human natures being united in the person of Christ, some things are attributed to one nature, which properly belong to the other. Thus, when it is said (1 Cor. ii. 8), "The Lord of glory was crucified;" and (Acts xx. 28) he is called "God, who purchased the church with his own blood;" the meaning is not, that he, as the Lord of glory, was crucified; or, as God, shed his blood; as if the Divine nature could be crucified and bleed; but that the Person who was the Lord of glory in one nature, was crucified in the other. So, when it is said, "The Son of Man is in heaven," the meaning is not, that he, as the Son of Man, was there while he was on the earth; but that he who was here in his human nature, was there in his Divine. "Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in flesh."

I will perform my good word towards you; for I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord; thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then ye shall pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you; and ye shall seek me and find me; I will turn away your captivity. Jer. xxix. 10, 11, 13, 14. The word of the Lord is right; he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. Psalm xxxiii. 4, 9.

WERE it so light a matter to rely on the faithfulness of God in times of distress, what need would there be of so many and various promises? If our faith be right, we must wait his time with patience, which certainly is not an easy task; since the promise of the Lord often tarries, and sometimes his providence seems to oppose his word. On such occasions we must remember that these are the very ways and methods of God, unsearchable by human penetration, yet always consistent and just, and worthy of the Divine nature. The wisdom of God chooses, first, to help us inwardly, by exercising faith and patience, and so prepares us for a right use of his outward dispensations, the pleasing, and the apparently severe. Thus we receive a double blessing at once from his hands. Whatever God does, or sends, is a blessing to his child.

Each of his words demands my faith;
My soul can rest on all he saith:
His truth inviolably keeps
The largest promise of his lips.

O, tell me with a gentle voice,
Thou art my God, and I'll rejoice!
Fill'd with thy love, I dare proclaim
The brightest honours of thy name.

Behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. Hos. ii. 14. Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field, let us lodge in the villages. Cant. vii. 11.

O LORD, this world is nothing to me but a wilderness, a place of tribulation, where, being tossed to and fro, I enjoy no rest; but, when I lift up my heart, and look for peace in thee, I am supported and comforted. Grant that I may thus be strengthened for the time to come, whenever I am at a loss what course to take. Let me always firmly believe thee to be a present help in trouble, who art able and willing to bear me up under all outward distresses, till I shall safely arrive at the rest appointed for the people of God. And give me fortitude to endure whatsoever thou shalt bring upon me, and to improve all the trying dispensations of thy providence. Often allure me from the world into secret fellowship with thyself, and speak words of comfort and peace to my troubled heart. Let my visits to thee be frequent, sensible, and refreshing, like the visits of the wearied and exhausted tradesman, leaving the town to visit the object of his love, in his quiet and beautiful country residence.

Our souls shall tread the desert through
With undiverted feet;
And faith and flaming zeal subdue
The terrors that we meet.

Our journey is a thorny maze,
But we march upward still;
Forget these troubles of the ways,
And reach at Zion's hill.

When ye pray, say, "Our Father," &c. Luke xi. 2. Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss. James iv. 3.

MANY say the Lord's Prayer, who do not *pray* it! they (like Austin, before his conversion, when he prayed for chastity) are afraid lest God should say, Amen, or, So be it, though they themselves will say so. They say, "Our Father;" but if he be their Father, where is his honour? They say, "Which art in heaven;" but if they believed it, how durst they sin as they do upon earth? They say, "Hallowed be thy name;" yet take God's name in vain. They say, "Thy kingdom come;" yet oppose the coming of his kingdom. They say, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven;" yet will not stand to their words, for "this is the will of God, their sanctification;" but they want none of that. They say, "Give us this day our daily bread;" yet mind not the feeding of their souls with "the bread" (Christ Jesus) "which came down from heaven." They say, "Forgive us as we forgive others;" but, alas! if God should take them at their word, how miserable were they, whose hearts burn with malice and revenge! They say, "Lead us not into temptation;" yet run into it, and tempt Satan himself to tempt them. They say, "Deliver us from evil;" and yet deliver themselves to evil, and give up themselves "to fulfil the lust of the flesh." Reader, how often hast thou been guilty of such vain petitions and repetitions? Wonder not, if thou prayest in such a manner as this, that thou receivest nothing. Pray for grace, that you may pray sincerely and successfully.

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Heb. xiii. 8.
Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that, as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. 1 Cor. i. 30, 31. *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness.* Dan. ix. 24. *In him have we righteousness and strength.* Isa. xlv. 24.

IN ourselves we find nothing but misery; in Christ all that is good; nay, he is himself our All. He works and gives what is necessary to salvation; therefore we cannot, and need not, bring any meritorious claims of our own; but, since he is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, and our All, we may, and must, rely only on his name, and draw everything from him by the continual prayer of faith. And when, by a living faith in Christ, he becomes our All, the law, sin, and Satan, lose their power to condemn us. My soul, see to it that thou makest Jesus thy all this day. Go to him *for* all thou needest, flee to him *from* all thou fearest, and carry to him all thy cares, sorrows, griefs, and woes. He is all thou couldst wish, he *has* all thou canst want, and he will *give* all that thy circumstances really require. Take him as God presents him, and use him as thy experience demands.

O let my prayer acceptance find,
 And bring the mighty blessing down;
 Eyesight impart, for I am blind,
 And seal me thine adopted son:
 A fallen, helpless creature take,
 And heir of thy salvation make.

Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. 1 John. iv. 11. I say unto you, Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven. Matt. v. 44, 45.

HYPOCRITES may counterfeit the children of God in many things; but they cannot love their enemies from their hearts; and yet by this we must try and know ourselves, whether we are really children of God or not. The world very easily, but falsely, suppose themselves to be God's children; sincere Christians find it often very hard to believe it, especially upon a new discovery of their sinfulness. It costs them many a sore conflict; for, if Satan disputed the Sonship of Christ, much less will he spare any of us. But, since love to the children of God, and to our enemies, is a sure evidence of the state of grace, when we are conscious of that love, we may well rejoice, though encompassed with a thousand discouragements.

Lord, fill my heart with holy love. Help me to love my enemies, and to pray for those who despitefully use me. Never let malice, envy, or a desire of revenge dwell in my heart. If such feelings are ever awakened, mercifully put forth thy power, and crush them in the bud. O to be filled with love!

Clamour, and war, and wrath, begone;
 Envy and spite for ever cease:
 Let bitter words no more be known
 Among the saints, the sons of peace.

Tender and kind be all our thoughts;
 Through all our lives let mercy run,
 So God forgives our num'rous faults,
 For the dear sake of Christ his Son.

And he said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing; and he said, Go again seven times. 1 Kings xviii. 43.

SIX times Elijah's servant looked towards the sea, before he could see anything; the seventh time he saw a cloud, but no bigger than his hand; yet that cloud, within a few hours, covered the heaven with darkness, and the earth with rain. In like manner, may a Christian suppliant be compelled to tarry long for the Divine answer. "Give me," he may often say, "at least, some springs of water—some feeling, some sorrow for my sins." Well, though at the sixth time of thy bending the knees, God should not grant thy request, and though at the seventh time there appears but one small drop swimming in thine eyes, be not discouraged; that drop may prove a shower; the beginning of that thaw may at last dissolve thy whole heart to water; and, as there is a full joy for the thorough conversion of a sinner, there may be a suitable measure of joy for one tear, nay, for one desire of a tear, of any one sinner that repenteth. Pray much for others; look toward the sea, and pray for those sailing on its bosom; look toward the land, and pray for those crossing it to a better country. Intercessory prayer is often a source of great blessing to us. God turned the captivity of Job, *when he prayed for his friends.*

Whene'er temptations fright my heart,
Or lure my feet aside,
My God, thy powerful aid impart,
My guardian and my guide.

Ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land; but if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them, shall be pricks in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell. Numb. xxxiii. 52, 55; Judges i. 27; ii. 14. Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shean, &c., and the Canaanites would dwell in that land; so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.

THE very same is to be observed in the holy and spiritual battles of the Lord. He that fights only against outward sins, is but very little, if at all, acquainted with the dangerous enemies in his heart, or the deep corruption of original sin; and so the tempter may easily gain an advantage over him. Experienced Christians guard more against the inward assaults of wickedness; they are at peace with no sin, but keep up a constant war with all their most subtle and darling lusts. However, though the Canaanites, our inbred foes, must be conquered, they will dwell in the land, and cannot be wholly thrust out of the bosom, which makes the Christian warfare continue till death; yet, give me grace, O Lord, never to spare my sinful lusts or tempers, but to look unto thee to destroy them without delay, that I may not be destroyed by them. Give me deep inward sanctification; so shall my lips be holy.

Is there a thing beneath the sun
That strives with thee my heart to share?
Ah! tear it thence, and reign alone,
The Lord of every motion there!
Then shall my heart from earth be free,
When it hath found repose in thee

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth; and the earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. Gen i. 1, 2. We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Eph. ii. 10.

BEFORE we can really grow in holiness we must be born again. How is it possible for a man to grow in sanctification without a real change being first wrought in his heart! It is the Spirit's way, first to strip us of our own righteousness and strength, to show us our nakedness and nothingness, to fill us with godly sorrow for sin, and then to lead to Jesus for pardon, sanctification, and justification. Christ being the Vine, we must first be united to him, and draw nourishment and strength from him by faith. When it is fulfilled, "they shall feed and lie down" in his pasture, "and none shall make afraid" (Zeph. iii. 13); then we shall be able to bring forth good fruit, and obtain victories. For it is God himself that thus makes us perfect in every good work, and prepares a table for us in the presence of our enemies. God works *in* us, that we may work *out* our own salvation with fear and trembling.

Plenteous grace with thee is found,
Grace to pardon all my sin;
Let the healing streams abound,
Make and keep me pure within.

Thou of life the fountain art,
Freely let me take of thee;
Spring thou up within my heart,
Rise to all eternity.

In the Lord have I righteousness and strength. Isaiah xlv. 24;
2 Cor. ii. 14; v. 19.

JUSTIFICATION through faith in Christ seems at first a very dark doctrine, hard to be understood; but, after seriously considering it, in reference to ourselves, we find, by Scripture and by experience, that we cannot be saved in any other way, and that nothing can be surer than this, though all mankind should turn away from it. When we are made to see that our best performances are unclean in the sight of God, and could not be accepted without the imputation of Christ's righteousness, then we are brought to submit entirely to Christ, and at last to look upon ourselves as wholly justified through him, which alone produces rest, strength, and a gentle spirit—the true image of Christ.

In vain do we hope to procure this rest by any reasonings or strong resolutions of our own. For, if we are sometimes able to master our affections by our own strength, this is yet a building of our own, and prevents our being earnest in prayer. We have now a form of godliness, without its power; and are still deceiving our own souls. For, nothing can be pleasing in the sight of God, and profit us in the last day, but what he works himself.—Away, therefore, with all confidence in our works of righteousness. Let us acknowledge the weakness of our strength, and apply, in our poor, blind, naked, lost, and miserable condition, to the blood and righteousness of Christ; then we shall also find power and dominion over sin.

In the day of trouble I will call upon thee, for thou wilt answer me. Psalm lxxxvi. 7. *Then shalt thou call and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am.* Isa. lviii. 9. *The Lord is rich unto all who call upon him; and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.* Joel ii. 32; Acts ii. 21; Rom. x. 12, 13, 19. *The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth and delivereth them out of all their troubles.* Psalm xxxiv. 17. *The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him.* Psalm cxlv. 18. *The prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* James v. 16.

WHAT encouraging assurances are these! How can God deny me anything now, that I pray for? He has passed his word; his Son has purchased every blessing; the Holy Spirit inspires the prayer, the word holds it forth, and the prayer of faith lays hold of it, and actually receives it. Prayer is the mouth of faith. If thou wilt have much, "open thy mouth wide," and it shall be filled. Who then should not be stirred up to pray much! O what foolishness is this, that we have nothing, but may obtain all from God and yet are so loath to pray much, and pray right! Holy Spirit, be a spirit of prayer in me; help my infirmities, subdue my corruptions, and stimulate my soul to pray without ceasing.

Prayer makes the darkened cloud withdraw,
Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw,
Gives exercise to faith and love,
Brings every blessing from above.

Restraining prayer, we cease to fight;
Prayer makes the Christian's armour bright,
And Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.

Swear not at all. Matthew v. 34.

SWEAR not by the creatures ; that, in effect, is swearing by their Maker. Neither swear by thy Maker, unless called to it by authority for putting an end to strife. Swear not falsely, calling the God of truth to witness a lie ; swear not needlessly, or rashly, as Saul did, 1 Samuel xiv. 39. Such oaths or vows are ensnaring. Swear not idle, common oaths, such as, O Christ ! O God ! Faith or troth ! By my soul ! As I live ! God bless me ! If we must give account for every idle word, much more for every idle oath, and most of all for horrible blasphemy, that profanes God's name, and is the very language of hell. As for him that is guilty of perjury, he not only destroys his own soul, but seeks to ruin his neighbour, by perverting justice, and robbing the innocent of his right. Sometimes God takes a false-swearer and self-cursurer at his word, and strikes him dead on the spot. Sometimes he says, "Let him alone !"—terrible judgment indeed. Lord, help the guilty to repent of their sin, and help all to watch and pray against it. My soul, let thy yea be yea, and thy nay be nay, as thy Lord commands thee.

Our God is nigh ;

He watches all we think or do :

Rolls o'er all time his penetrating eye,

And tracks the round our steps pursue.

By night, by day,

Waking or sleeping—o'er the sea—

Up to the heaven—where'er thou tak'st thy way

Down to the grave,—He follows thee.

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. Rom. xii. 19.

JUDGE ye, then, my brethren, would it be wise to snatch the rod out of the all-powerful hand of God, to take it into our own, even were it in our power to do it? We are taught by the holy prophet not to avenge ourselves, it being daring presumption to usurp God's province, and to step into his throne. He that chastises the nations, shall not he correct? Might may overcome right for a time, to try God's children; but whether that is done with a close hand, so as not to be discovered, or with a high hand, so as not to be controlled, God will in due time show himself, and vindicate the honours of his slighted government. It is therefore our wisdom to call to mind our blessed Lord's silence, when he suffered, and to copy after it, committing ourselves to him that judgeth righteously. Gracious Lord, give me patience to bear the contradiction of sinners, and the opposition of men, leaving my cause in thy hand, and trusting thy providence for my vindication. Thou wilt then bring forth my righteousness as the light, and my judgment as the noon-day. Lord, fill me with love, pity, forbearance, and long-suffering, for the glory of thine own name! O to be Christ-like!

Rest in the Lord, and keep his way,
Nor let your anger rise,
Though Providence should long delay
To punish haughty vice.

If any man be in Christ he is a new creature. 2 Cor. v. 17.

LET no man be discouraged from coming to Christ, because he finds not in himself that godly sorrow for sin, that ability to repent, and all those spiritual qualifications which he desires to have; we must first be in Christ before we are new creatures. We would fain have something before we come; we are prone to conclude that God's pardons are not free, but that we must bring something in our hand: whereas the proclamation runs thus—"Buy without money;"—"Come, and take the water of life freely." Therefore, do not say, I have a sinful disposition, and a hard heart, and cannot mourn for sin as I should; I will therefore stay till I am better. This is as if you should say, I must go to the physician, but I will have my disease healed first. The end of going to Christ is, that this very hardness of thy heart may be taken away; that this very deadness of thy spirit may be removed; that thou mayest be enlivened, quickened, healed; that thou mayest hate sin, and become fruitful in righteousness. Look not for sanctification, nor for genuine fruits of righteousness, before thy soul be united to Christ by a living faith. For it is faith that purifies the heart, and works (produces good works) by love. It is faith that prove to us the hand by which alone we can lay hold on Christ. Thou must first be in Christ, grafted into Christ by faith, before thou canst be a new creature. Lord, give me faith, if I have it not, and increase if I have, that I may bring forth fruit to thy glor

All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. 1 Cor. vi. 12.

MANY that are well affected to religion, and receive instructions of piety with pleasure and satisfaction, often wonder how it comes to pass that they make no greater progress in that religion which they so much admire. Now the reason of it is, because religion lives only in their head, while something else has possession of their heart; and therefore they continue, from year to year, mere admirers and praisers of piety, without ever coming up to the reality and perfection of its precepts. If it be asked why religion does not get possession of their hearts, the reason is, not because they live in gross sins or debaucheries, (for their regard to religion preserves them from such disorders,) but because their hearts are constantly perverted, and kept in a bad state, by the wrong use of such things as are lawful; for our souls may receive very great hurt, merely by the abuse of innocent and lawful things. What is more innocent than rest and retirement? Yet what is more dangerous than sloth and idleness? What is more lawful than eating and drinking? Yet what is more destructive of virtue than sensuality and indulgence? Care in the management of a family is certainly commendable; yet what is so prejudicial as an anxious worldly temper? Reader, follow the Apostle, and be on thy guard as it respects even lawful things; let them not engage thee beyond due measure.

There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. 1 Cor. xii. 6.

SOME believers are remarkable for the strength of their faith in trials, even unto death; others for liveliness and activity in duty; others for wisdom and prudence; others for their zeal in defence of the truth; others for spiritual knowledge; others for meekness and patience; others for outward usefulness; and some for an inward and spiritual life of communion with God. But all these are the various gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, dividing severally to every man as he willeth, and are given to profit withal, according to the place allotted to each in the Church or in the world. My fellow-Christians, let us hence learn a lesson of forbearance to our brethren. It is not right to judge of another by our own pattern. Art thou a warm and active Christian? Condemn not him whose mind may be more placid and contemplative than thine. He who now creeps in humble silence, may in a moment be raised higher than thou art. The same may be said of other differences among the followers of Jesus. Let us then no longer envy one another, or indulge a rash and censorious spirit; but rather covet earnestly the best gifts, such as meekness and love; and, by the help of Divine grace, faithfully improve the talent committed to our trust, that each of us may receive that heart-reviving address, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!" The commendation of Jesus at the end will more than make up for all our efforts by the way.

Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above. James i. 17.

READER, it is a point of the greatest importance for thee to know, that every evil thing is of thyself, and every good thing of God. Without faith we cannot be saved; but (saith St. Paul, Eph. ii. 8), "by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." We are commanded to repent; but (Acts v. 31) we read that Christ is exalted at the Father's right hand, to be a "Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel." We must be born again; but regeneration is wholly of God's will. His children are "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John i. 13.) Saving knowledge is the gift of God: "to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. xiii. 11.) Effectual calling is a Divine work. (2 Tim. i. 9.) Justification is entirely of grace; we are justified freely. Adoption is an act of grace; he vouchsafes that high privilege, as it seemeth good in his sight. Perseverance in duty is God's gift; for "we are preserved by the power of God to salvation!" Eternal life is also a gift; "the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ." A right knowledge of these things, believer, will keep thee humble, and dependent upon God; and not only dispose thee to give him the glory of his grace, but to seek to him diligently for it. And a clear representation of them, will encourage the poor, guilty, self-condemned sinner, to seek them, because they are free gifts, and entirely of grace.

We would see Jesus. Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me. John xii. 21; v. 39.

IT is remarkable, that the wise men, travelling to find Christ, followed only the star; as long as they had that in view, they were assured that they were in the right way, and we may believe had great pleasure in their journey; but, when they entered Jerusalem (whereas the star led them not thither, but to Bethlehem), they were still at a loss to determine where the new-born Saviour was to be found, having lost sight of the star that should guide them thither. When we are inquiring for the doctrine of Christ, and feel anxious to approach him, let us keep in view the star of God's word. This will indeed prove a light to our paths, by following which, while others are misled by the meteors of fancy, we shall be brought to the knowledge of Christ here, and to the full enjoyment of him hereafter. Reader, the whole design of this little book is to lead thee to "search the Scriptures," which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. God's word, rightly used, always leads to Jesus.

Let all the heathen writers join
To form one perfect book;
Great God, if once compared with thine,
How mean their writings look!

Not the most perfect rules they gave
Could show one sin forgiven;
Nor lead a step beyond the grave,
But thine conducts to heaven.

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers; and grieve not the Holy Spirit of God. Let not filthiness be once named among you, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient. Eph. iv. 29; v. 4.

IDLE words are hurtful words; they grieve the Holy Spirit, destroy the sacred and happy feelings which have been obtained by prayer, and cause nothing but levity and distraction of mind. Let this be a caution against a talkative disposition, which is usually productive of corrupt communications. May all Christians take heed to refrain their tongues, and never speak unadvisedly; but always consider first, whether their words can be profitable to others, and acceptable to God in heaven. O Lord, teach me thy wisdom, "to keep my mouth as it were with a bridle," and to weigh all my words like gold. Let my heart and lips be governed by thy Holy Spirit, that both my silence and talking may be according to thy will and discretion. Grant that I may converse much with thee in prayer and thanksgiving, for mine own spiritual good, and that of others; and, whenever I open my lips, let my words be so seasoned and blessed, as to minister grace to the hearers. O for salt to season the conversation of Christians in the present day, and my conversation especially!

If aught could tempt my soul to stray
From heavenly wisdom's narrow way,
To fly the good I would pursue,
Or do the thing I would not do,—
Still he who felt temptation's power
Will guard me in that dangerous hour.

And he dreamed, and behold, a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it. Gen. xxviii. 12.

THIS ladder the Lord Jesus Christ applies to himself (John i. 51); it may be considered as representing the Divine Providence, which governs all things. The several steps of the ladder are the motions and actions of Providence; the angels going up and down, show that they are the great ministers of Providence, never idle, but always employed in the preservation of the just; their ascending, means their going up to receive the Divine orders and commands; and their descending, their coming down upon earth to put them in execution. So that, in his representation, God signified to Jacob, that the man who is under the custody and protection of Divine Providence, finds company in a wilderness, security in the midst of dangers, and direction in the most difficult undertaking. Many ministering spirits hold continual correspondence between earth and heaven, and are daily and hourly "sent forth to minister unto them who shall be heirs of salvation." Yet Jesus trusteth not his people to angels, but keepeth them himself.

Thy ministering spirits descend,
To watch while thy saints are asleep,
By day and by night they attend,
The heirs of salvation to keep;
Bright seraphs, despatched from the throne,
Repair to the stations assigned,
And angels elect are sent down,
To guard the elect of mankind.

Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Rev. xix. 6.

GOD is the Lord of Hosts; he is the great Commander of heaven and earth; he it is that directs all conflicts in war; no field is pitched, no battle fought, but by his special order and commission, and all for the accomplishment of his glory. But as those who stand on the same level with two great armies ready to engage, conceive them to be a disordered multitude, though if they beheld them from a high hill, they would discern that they were artificially ranged, and that every one served under his own colours; even so, those who behold the state of the world with the eyes of flesh and blood, dim by reason of the corruption of their judgments and affections, conclude that all things are thrown into confusion; they "see servants riding on horses, and princes going on foot;" they observe that the worse men are, the better they fare; and that they fare the worse, the better they become. But, if they would go into God's sanctuary, and judge of occurrences by heavenly principles, then they would confess, that the armies of heaven, earth, and even hell, are duly marshalled, and that, notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary, the God of order will bring light out of darkness, and order out of all this seeming confusion. He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

Deep are his counsels and unknown;
But grace and truth support his throne!
Though gloomy clouds his way surround,
Justice is their eternal ground.

Thou hast thrust sore at me, that I might fall; but the Lord helped me. Psalm cxviii. 13. Preserved in Jesus Christ, and called. Jude 1.

JESUS was in the council, undertook our cause, struck hands in the covenant as our Surety, wrought out a righteousness for us, suffered on the tree to redeem us, ever lives, and ever loves, and ever pleads our cause, while he represents our persons before the infinitely just and righteous Jehovah, his Father, and our Father, now well-pleased with us, because accepted and preserved in the Beloved. Are these things so? And has the Lord the Spirit, the glorifier of Jesus, enlightened our understandings to see these things, enabled us to believe, and assured our hearts of our own happy share and interest in them? O, my soul, stop, reflect, dwell on such wonderful power, distinguishing love, and appropriated mercy! Now let all mine enemies exert their utmost power; I will not be afraid. Afflictions, pains, temptations, may await me; waves and storms may go over my head; Satan may sift me as wheat; the waters of death may prove bitter to my taste; yet will I not be discouraged; he that died for me will take care of me; he that pardoned my aggravated offences will heal my infirmities; he that knew the power of temptation will support and deliver me out of all. This I believe. Lord, help my unbelief.

The wisdom, the power, the love, the promise, the covenant, and the oath of Jehovah, stand all engaged for the preservation of a poor unworthy believer of Jesus. *Alleluia.*

Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. Matt. xi. 29. Be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. 1 Peter v. 5, 6.

SUCH as are haughty and self-conceited rush against the mighty hand of God, and destroy themselves; but those that are humbled under it, will be protected by the same. Whatever knowledge or skill we may obtain in the schools of human learning, the Scripture does not allow us to be truly wise, but calls us blind and mere worldly students, till we learn to be poor in spirit, lowly in heart, and dead to the world. (Prov. xi. 2; 1 Cor. i. and ii.) Therefore, the more a man dies to this world, the more he is enlightened, the more he lives to Christ, and becomes one with him. Naturally, we love pride, and hate humility; but just in proportion as we are taught by the Spirit of God, we admire, long, and pray for humility. The dust is our proper place, and the lower we lie, the happier and holier we shall be. Nature was ruined by pride, and it is restored by humility. Better, therefore, to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud. "Walk humbly with thy God."

Lord, I cannot, must not rest,
Till I thy mind obtain,
Chase presumption from my breast,
And all thy mildness gain!
Give me, Lord, thy gentle heart,
Thy lowly mind my portion be
Meek Redeemer, now impart
Thine own humility.

And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him.
Genesis xxxii. 1.

AS Jacob was favoured with a heavenly vision when he first departed from his father's house, so the Divine Being thought proper again to favour him with the same token of his protection, on his return thither, in order to encourage him to meet with confidence the dangers he had to encounter. Hence we may observe, that, when God designs his people for extraordinary trials, he prepares them by extraordinary comforts. We should think it had been more seasonable for these angels to have appeared to him just in the heat of his engagement (either with Laban before, or Esau after), than in this calm and quiet interval, when he saw not imminent peril. But God will have us, when we are in peace, to provide for trouble; and, when trouble comes, to draw comfort and encouragement from former experiences; knowing assuredly, that he who has delivered in six troubles, will also deliver in seven, and in due time out of all. This may be a representation of God's people at death, who are then returning to Canaan, to their heavenly Father's house; the angels of God will then meet them, to congratulate them on the happy finishing of their labours, and carry them to their everlasting rest.

Saints in glory perfect made,
Wait thy passage through the shade;
Ardent for thy coming o'er;
See they throng the blissful shore!

By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. Matthew xii. 37.

THE general turn of a man's discourse will clearly discover the bent of his mind; for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Other outward marks may be imitated; but not to offend in tongue, to be free from detraction and boasting, to speak the truth in love, to "let no corrupt communication" (nothing contrary to peace and holiness) "proceed out of the mouth;" this is the finger of God. Here the hypocrite and formalist always fail. Let us earnestly pray for grace to bridle the tongue. "O Lord, set a watch before my mouth, keep the door of my lips;" that I may never bring a reproach upon my profession by speaking proud, false, foolish, or censorious words. Deeply sanctify my heart, that out of the good treasure of my heart I may bring forth good things. My justification before God as a sinner is, by the perfect work of Jesus; but before man as a professed saint, by my words I shall be justified, and by my words I shall be condemned. If the tongue denies Jesus, the heart cannot be right; and if the lips habitually utter folly, the soul must be depraved. O for grace to guard the tongue!

Supreme High-Priest, the pilgrim's light,
 My heart for thee prepare;
 Thine image stamp, and deeply write
 Thy superscription there:—
 Ah! let my forehead bear thy seal,
 My arm thy badge retain,
 My heart the inward witness feel
 That I am born again!

Loose them, and bring them unto me; and if any say aught unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them, and straightway he will send them. Matt. xxi. 2, 3. The Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands. Judges xv. 14.

THUS the Spirit of the Lord makes us free from all spiritual bonds; for "where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." (2 Cor. iii. 17.) Though I was torn from Christ by the enemy, yet as a robber he gets no right to me. Christ does not give up that right to me which he claims on so many accounts; and as soon as I am made willing by his grace to surrender myself to him, and desire to be delivered from the power of Satan, he vindicates and saves me, as his property; I am his; Satan loses his hold, and nothing in the world can withhold me from my Redeemer. All the fetters must fall off. My soul, beware of yielding to the solicitations of any Delilah, or thou wilt suffer for it as Samson did. But, if thou hast backslidden, cry aloud to Jesus, and the Spirit of God will come upon thee, and then thy spiritual strength will return to thee again. Sin weakens, but grace strengthens, us. Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, by which thou art sealed to the day of redemption.

Arise, O Lord, fulfil thy grace,
While I thy glory sing;
Remove each horror from the grave,
And take from death his sting.

Salvation to the Lord belongs,
His arm alone can save;
Blessings attend his people here,
And reach beyond the grave.

Make you a new heart, and a new spirit. Ezek. xviii. 31.

See also 2 Cor. v. 17-21.

MANY who would be thought to have made considerable advances in religion, remain to this hour destitute of deep and self-abasing convictions. Hence they never effectually repaired to Christ for reconciliation and righteousness; they feel not the necessity of a new heart, but content themselves with the observance of religious rites, and with a morality that elevates them but a little above the prevailing manner of the world. O Lord, let me daily receive a word from thee, to nourish and strengthen my soul, so as to be renewed daily by it more and more. Renew a right spirit within me, make me conformable to thy will, and wholly thine. Thou didst say to Israel, "Make you a new heart;" and a new heart I need; but, conscious of my inability to produce one, I lay myself at thy feet and pray, "Fulfil in me all the good pleasure of thy goodness, and the work of faith with power." O take my heart and make it new! Put thy own sweet Spirit within me, and make me holy, as thou art holy. "Give what thou requirest, and then require what thou wilt."

O for a heart to love my God;
A heart from sin set free;
A heart that always feels the blood
So freely shed for me;

A heart resigned, submissive, meek,
My dear Redeemer's throne;
Where only Christ is heard to speak,
Where Jesus reigns alone!

Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things.
Luke x. 41. *Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are*
the issues of life. Prov. iv. 23.

AS the virtue of a strong spirituous liquor evaporates by degrees in a vial which is not closely stopped, in like manner the life and power of the Spirit insensibly vanish away, if the heart is not kept with all diligence. Therefore many must be tried and sifted, that they may know, like Hezekiah, what is in their hearts. (2 Chron. xxxii. 31.) What then is more necessary than to take heed to our own spirit, and to keep close to the written word? For, as the latter times draw nearer, the more plausible will errors and seducements appear, both on your right hand and on your left; beware of being drawn off from the truth, either by the worldly prudence of half-hearted professors, or by pretences to merit in the self-righteous Pharisee. Gracious God, do thou keep my heart, and preserve me from being led away by the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, lest thy word in me be choked, and so become unfruitful. Give me a quick discernment, and a tender sensibility, that I may detect error, and tremble at the approach of sin. May I never trust my heart, but keep my eye upon it, as upon a thief; and hold it in check, as with bit and bridle, knowing that it is deceitful, and desperately wicked.

Be earth, with all her scenes, withdrawn;
Let noise and vanity be gone;
In secret silence of the mind,
My heaven, and there my God, I find.

My soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land. Psalm cxliii. 6. Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. Rev. xxii. 17. If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. John vii. 37, 38.

WHEN thy spiritual vigour and enjoyments, O man of God, begin to fail, examine thyself closely what may be the cause; implore pardon for all known offences, and guard against repeating them. And, though thou shouldest not discover any particular sign of degeneracy, yet humble thyself deeply before the Lord; remembering, at the same time, that thou art accepted, beloved, justified, and blessed in Christ. In this disposition quietly wait to be refreshed again with the streams of divine grace; but be also sure to cherish and make a right use of them. Thus thou shalt be like a watered garden. (Isaiah lviii. 11.) We daily need the renewing of the Holy Ghost. The earth does not more need the dew and the rain, to make it fruitful, than we need divine communications, to make and keep us holy. We must often go to Jesus for the living water, or we shall become dry, barren, and unlovely. God has said, "I will be as the dew unto Israel;" and Israel should daily plead with him to fulfil his word.

My stock lies dead, and no increase
Doth my dull husbandry improve;
O let thy graces, without cease,
Drop from above.

The dew doth every morning fall;
And shall the dew outstrip thy Dove?
The dew, for which grass cannot call,
Drops from above.

My soul waiteth upon God; from him cometh my salvation. He only is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved. Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Psalm lxii. 1, 2, 8.

THE more patient, believing, and single-eyed we are, the sooner we shall see the salvation and victory of the Lord. Double-minded souls have the greatest struggle, and the slothful must tarry the longer. Sometimes, it is true, though we are faithful, yet we must cry out, "O Lord, how long?" (Psalm vi. 3.) But, nevertheless, he always hears and delivers us, though we do not see and feel it directly, but seem to suffer continually. In heaven we shall certainly see it, and reap the blessed fruits of all our afflictions and prayers. But even when the Lord delays to deliver, he supports us; secretly communicating strength, suggesting precious promises, and giving us inward composure. We may well wait *for* God now, who waited for us so long; and we may well wait *upon* God, seeing he has appended a blessing to waiting. He that waits longest often receives most, and is filled with gratitude and praise. Those who wait on men will be disappointed; but those that wait on the Lord shall be satisfied.

As sparks break out from burning coals,
And still are upwards borne;
So grief is rooted in our souls,
And man grows up to mourn.

Yet with my God I leave my cause,
And trust his promised grace;
He rules me by his well-known laws
Of love and righteousness.

I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. Psalm xxxvii. 25.

THIS declaration is animating to every believer's heart. The Lord indeed cares for the righteous; for those who, having seen the want of mercy, feel confident, through the promise of God, that there is forgiveness with him, through the meritorious life and death of Jesus Christ. He has declared that he will never leave nor forsake them; that he will withhold from them no manner of thing that is good. He cares also for their seed; so that they shall not beg their bread. He frequently provides for them when their parents are no more, and in such unexpected ways, that many who see it are constrained to acknowledge, "This is the Lord's doing." Sometimes, while parents are living, in addition to the bounties of his providence, he places before them the bread which endureth unto everlasting life, and gives them an appetite for the heavenly food. O Lord, if mine ears have heard, if mine eyes have seen, and more especially, if I partake of such blessings, thankfully may I own that thou art a God keeping covenant and mercy; and make this proof of thy faithfulness a ground of reliance upon thee for all needful and promised blessing! Help me to cast all my care on thee, and to endeavour, by prayer, instruction, and example, that thy goodness may be sanctified to my seed, that we may live together, here and hereafter, to the praise of the glory of thy grace. O to meet my offspring at God's right hand!

Strengthened with all might according to his glorious power.

Col. i. 11.

O MY soul, what encouraging words are these ! How full of meaning ! The Lord our Righteousness is the Lord our Strength. He is near at hand, believer, to strengthen thee according to thy need ; not in one or two respects, but “ with all might ; ” with a supply suited to every occasion, and that to the utmost, answerable to what may be expected from the exertion of “ his own glorious power.” Happy state of the believer in Jesus ! Though feeble in himself, surrounded with enemies, and exercised with a continual warfare, he shall not be overpowered ; for the promise and the arm of God are on his side. The Lord, who can do what he pleases, is in alliance, yea, in covenant, with a believer, and therefore he shall be made more than conqueror through Christ who has loved him. Observe, my soul, this is part of Paul’s prayer for the Colossians ; thou needest the blessing as much as they did, therefore adopt it as thine own ; and often to-day, and every day, lift up thy heart to God, and beseech him to strengthen thee with all might according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering, with joyfulness.

For ever blessed be the Lord,
My Saviour and my shield ;
He sends his Spirit with his word,
To arm me for the field.

When sin and hell their force unite,
He makes my soul his care,
Instructs me to the heavenly fight,
And guards me through the war

My beloved is mine, and I am his. Cant. ii. 16. I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord. Hos. ii. 19, 20.

BY faith in the blood of Christ we are accepted, and closely united to him as our Bridegroom. By that we daily eat his flesh, drink his blood, and are sprinkled all over; and need there is of a daily sprinkling, that our persons and services may be accepted; and that our sinful souls may be washed and renewed in the all-purifying fountain; since the best of our works, our prayers and praises, our duties and graces, are all unclean till washed in the blood of Jesus. See Heb. ix. 19—21. But if sprinkled with his blood, we shall desire to be united to his person, and to call him our beloved. Nor will union to Jesus satisfy us, for we shall want close and intimate communion with him. O the blessedness of being betrothed to Jesus now, for then we shall be openly acknowledged, and be publicly married to him, when he comes in his own glory, and all the holy angels with him!

Object of my first desire,
Jesus, crucified for me!

All to happiness aspire,
Only to be found in thee;

Thee to praise, and thee to know,
Constitute our bliss below;

Thee to see, and thee to love,
Constitute our bliss above.

Lord, it is not life to live,
If thy presence thou deny;
Lord, if thou thy presence give,
'Tis no longer death to die!

When thou saidst; Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek. Psalm xxvii. 8. I am thine, save me; for I have sought thy precepts. Psalm cxix. 94. They who seek me early shall find me. Prov. viii. 17. The humble shall see this, and be glad; and your heart shall live, that seek God. Psalm lxi. 32. Seek, and ye shall find. Matt. vii. 7. Whosoever findeth me, findeth life. Prov. viii. 35. I am the Life. John xiv. 6.

SUCH arguments and entreaties we may use with God, to strengthen us in faith: he does not want them, but we do; and he is well pleased when we take him at his word. Were we to decline approaching God with supplications till our hearts were conscious of peculiar life and earnestness, we might perhaps for ever remain distant and prayerless. We must not therefore yield to the suggestions of a dull frame; but rouse ourselves, and at least make a determined effort. Thus we may hope that God will help our infirmities, and warm our affections; so that our hearts, while seeking him, amidst much discouragement, may "live." O Lord, I plead thy precious promises; and thou canst not deny thy word. Thou hast engaged to assist a feeble petitioner. Let thy Holy Spirit abide with me, to quicken my soul when fainting, and to rule my heart in all things, that no sin may have dominion over me; but, that I may conquer evil within me, overcome the world without me, and win the prize set before me.

Lord, I address thy heavenly throne;
 Call me a child of thine,
 Send down the Spirit of thy Son,
 To form my heart divine.

O my God, I trust in thee; let me not be ashamed. Psalm xxv. 2. In thee, O Lord, do I hope; thou wilt hear, O Lord my God. Psalm xxxviii. 15. Let none that wait on thee be ashamed. Psalm xxv. 3. Hope maketh not ashamed. Rom. v. 5. They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which abideth for ever. Psalm cxxv. 1. The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak; though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Hab. ii. 3. See also Isaiah xlix. 23.

DOES God delay his promises, and the enemy raise a suspicion against his faithfulness? Remember, it is said, "Wait." Thou art still alive, and shalt be a witness to God's faithfulness. If he were not faithful and true, he could not be God. His faithfulness is eternal, and as sure and great as himself; above all our thoughts. Thou shalt at last the more gloriously experience it, and not be ashamed. Heaven and earth shall pass away; but his word shall not fail, because "He keepeth truth for ever." And his truth concerning his people comprehends all their salvation, and all their desire. Art thou tempted to repine or complain? Ponder well the question, "Wherefore should a living man complain; a man for the punishment of his sins?" Then, instead of repining, thou wilt exclaim, "It is of the Lord's mercies that I am not consumed, and because his compassions fail not; they are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness." Thanks be unto God, that I am out of hell!

Let faith exert its conquering power,
Say, in thy fearing, trembling hour,
"Father, thy pitying aid impart!"
'Tis done! a sigh can reach his heart.

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.
John xii. 32.

JESUS spake this of his death: and it is the remembrance of his cruel death, of what he suffered, said, and finished, when he hung naked and wounded upon the cross, that relieves an afflicted conscience, and effectually engages the sinner's heart to himself. The sharpest convictions, if not relieved by this sight, will never teach the heart to love. The strongest resolutions, unless made with this bleeding object in view, will melt away like snow. But a crucified Saviour is a powerful loadstone indeed; multitudes have been drawn by it from sin to holiness, from Satan to God, from earth to heaven. My soul, whenever thou feelest at a distance from God, turn to the cross, look to Jesus, and fix thine eye on him until drawn close to him. Looking, we almost insensibly move toward him, and when we get near him, we enjoy pardon, peace, and fellowship with God. O to experience daily the attracting power of the cross of Jesus.

Was it for crimes that I have done
He groaned upon the tree?
Amazing pity! grace unknown!
And love beyond degree!

Well might I hide my blushing face,
While his dear cross appears;
Dissolve my heart in thankfulness,
And melt mine eyes to tears.

But drops of grief can ne'er repay
The debt of love I owe;
Lord, I would give myself away,
'Tis all that I can do.

Love seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth. 1 Cor. xiii. 5-8.

O MY heavenly Father, I desire to love thee and my neighbour with a pure heart fervently, and entreat that thou wouldest let me know and enjoy thy love in Christ, as the only means of producing this love in me. For how can my heart be cold, when resting at the cross of Christ, and feeling the virtue of his blood? Or how can it be hard, when lying in thy bosom, richly tasting of thy grace, and sweetly experiencing thine everlasting love to me, a vile and miserable sinner? Or how can it be destitute of love and gratitude, when dwelling on the fulness of the manifestation of thy Divine mercy? May a sense of thy love melt my hard heart into love, and entirely transform it. There is nothing that I need so much as love. There is nothing I find so difficult as love. To love and pity sinners. To love and bear with Saints. To love and cleave to Jesus. To love and exercise unhesitating confidence in God, under all circumstances. Ah, this is difficult! But grace can make me lowly and loving: may that grace in abundance be given me, O my God!

Should I distribute all my store
To feed the bowels of the poor,
Or give my body to the flame
To gain a martyr's glorious name:

If love to God and love to men
Be absent, all my hopes are vain;
Nor tongues, nor gifts, nor fiery zeal,
The work of love can e'er fulfil.

Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. Psalm xxv. 1. Thou hast heard the desire of the humble, thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear. Psalm x. 17.

FAITH only desires Christ, and neither delights in the gain, nor grieves much at the loss of temporal things ; but, through an earnest desire for Christ and his word, rises above all creatures, and overcomes all worldly pleasures and fears. This, being the work which God undertakes, will certainly be accomplished ; nay, it is looked upon as really accomplished already, in our desires and endeavours after it ; in the same manner as evil desires are reckoned for deeds in the sight of God, though they never proceed to outward acts. Such is the encouragement of the feeblest believer, amidst all difficulties, and in the face of the most powerful opposition. Oh, may I guard my thoughts and keep a watch on my tongue, that I offend not in thought or word against my Lord. How sweet, how refreshing, the words of the Apostle on this subject : “ If there be first a willing mind it is accepted, according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.” O the infinite condescension of our God, to read our thoughts, accept our desires, and take the meaning of our sighs, groans, and tears !

I cannot bear thine absence, Lord ;
My life expires if thou depart ;
Be thou, my heart, still near my God,
And thou, my God, be near my heart.

I was not born for earth and sin,
Nor can I live on things so vile ;
Yet I will stay my Father's time,
And hope and wait for heaven awhile.

Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon thee; thou saidst, Fear not. O Lord, thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul; thou hast redeemed my life. Lam. iii. 57, 58. Fear not, for I am with thee. Isa. xliii. 5. I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death. Rev. i. 18.

CHRIST has overcome death, led captivity captive, and "by one offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified." (Heb. x. 14.) Whoever leaves this world, believing in him, has therefore nothing to fear after death. O, my heavenly Father, dispose me to seek diligently after holiness; and, though the work of sanctification will be imperfect in this life (which should humble me much), yet let it cause no fear of death, nor disturb my confidence in thee; since my salvation and my confidence do not depend on a perfect holiness here, but on my being in Christ, and adopted through him. This adoption the weakest child enjoys as well as the strongest; though both are not equally sensible of it. Every true believer, whether weak or strong, has eternal life, and shall not fall into condemnation. If, therefore, I am a child of God, though a weak one, I am still an heir, and shall find life and deliverance in death. He has often made his strength perfect in weakness, and his promises never fail. Spirit of adoption, descend into my heart, and bear witness with my spirit, that I am a child of God!

Walk with me through the dreadful shade
And certify that thou art mine;
My spirit, calm and undismayed,
I shall into thy hands resign.

And he gave him a sign; but Hezekiah rendered not again, according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up. 2 Chron. xxxii. 24, 25.

AHAZ, trusting in the Assyrians for help, had refused a sign graciously offered by God as a token of deliverance. He did not choose to put his whole trust in God, though his pretence was, that he would not tempt the Lord. This might lead his son Hezekiah to ask for a sign, and it proved a snare to him. The king of Babylon, on finding Hezekiah so highly honoured by the sun (see Isa. xxxviii. 7, 8), thought it incumbent upon him to send ambassadors with a letter and present to such a favourite of the god of the Babylonians.

Hezekiah, delighted with this mark of attention from a court which he had feared, made an ostentatious display of his treasure and dignity. In consequence of this, Isaiah was directed to assure him that what he had shown, in the vanity of his heart, should be carried to Babylon. Hezekiah had neglected a fair opportunity of stating to these ambassadors, and, through them, to their king, the folly of their idolatry in worshipping the sun, which the recent miracle had proved to be under the direction of a superior Being. He ought also to have given God all the glory in this matter, and have rested on him, and him alone, for safety, who had just then given him such a striking proof of his power and favour. Worldly wisdom is absolute folly; and, when set in opposition to the will of God, will be sure to disappoint us. Lord, preserve me from Hezekiah's sin, and every sin!

Can two walk together except they be agreed? Amos iii. 3.

READER, I suppose thee a religious person; one that has been converted by the power of grace; one that is desirous to glorify God in life and conversation: one that has an interest in Jesus, and wants to have it made more manifest to thine own self every day; one that considers this life as a passage to a better, and would be glad of a spiritual companion to go along with thee, for "two are better than one." Give not the right hand of fellowship to any before thou hast tried him; for two cannot walk comfortably together except they be agreed; bring him to the law of God; the eternal, moral law of God, contained in the Ten Commandments, and ask him, "Does he look upon that law of God as the rule of his life?" If he denies it, avoid him. If he says that he is not under the commanding power of it, turn away from him. But if he says that he sincerely takes it as God's revealed will to him, owning the authority thereof over his conscience and conversation, breathing after universal obedience, repenting and mourning where he falls short, and fleeing by faith to Christ for all peace and pardon, take such a one for a friend and companion. He will guard thee against licentiousness on the one hand, and against proud self-confidence on the other. "He that walketh with wise men will be wise."

His faithful counsel, tender care,
Unwearied love, and humble prayer;
O, these will claim the grateful tear,
And all my drooping courage cheer.

My soul fainteth for thy salvation. My soul is continually in my hand. Uphold me according to thy word, that I may live; and let me not be ashamed of my hope. Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name.
 Psalm cxix. 81, 109, 116, 132.

O LORD, I love thy name, since thou art called *merciful, gracious, long-suffering*, and even *the Lord our Righteousness*. I depend upon nothing of mine own, but throw myself entirely upon thy free grace and righteousness, which alone keeps me in peace. Without thee I am ignorant and weak; and, Satan being as wicked as he is cunning, what would become of me, if I were not kept and preserved by thee? "Thy name is a strong tower; the righteous enter there, and are safe;" there let me abide also continually, so shall I be safe from every adversary. There shall I dwell in peace, under the shadow of the Almighty's wing. I long, I faint to experience thy delivering power. O deliver me from the power of sin, the assaults of Satan, and the influence of this evil world. Deliver me often, deliver me daily, and at my last hour let my deliverance be signal and complete. Then may I be freed from guilt, fear, and temptation, and have an abundant entrance administered unto me into thy heavenly kingdom.

The arms of everlasting love
 Beneath my soul are placed;
 And on the Rock of Ages set
 My slippery footsteps fast.

Satan may vent his sharpest spite,
 And all his legions roar;
 Almighty mercy guards my life,
 And bounds his raging power.

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name, be the glory.
Psalm cxv. 1.

HOW little reason have we to glory in anything of our own, since nothing but sin is ours; which even defiles that which is of God!

O Lord, grant that I may always give thee the praise of thy own, and may learn to delight and glory in thee, having no aim but to walk before thee in godly simplicity and sincerity. For he that walketh uprightly, walketh surely, (Prov. x. 9.) All disquiet of mind arises from our own lusts and unmortified tempers, which make the bosom like a troubled sea. And no settled calm shall we find till we have a single eye to God's glory, and can count ourselves worthy of no good. Then we may draw comfort out of trouble, and learn to praise the Lord, whether he giveth or taketh away. Then shall we recognise his hand in every dispensation of providence; being sure that all things are working for our good, and tending to God's glory, (which he knows best how to promote,) and that nothing but sin can make us unhappy and miserable. Lord, keep me from sin, and then deal with me as thou wilt!

My Maker and my King,
To thee my all I owe;
Thy sovereign bounty is the spring
From whence my blessings flow.

The creature of thy hand,
On Thee alone I live
My God, thy benefits demand
More praise than life can give.

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Rom. viii. 33, 34.

IF "the accuser of the brethren" should appear to a dying believer, and exhibit, as on a parchment roll, the various idle, false, unchaste, and angry words, which he had at any time uttered, together with a statement of all his sinful thoughts and actions, the believer, while pleading guilty to every charge, and even adding, from his sorrowful recollection, a thousand aggravations, might ask, "Why hast thou not reminded me of what is equally true, and to me, thus burdened with thy reproaches and mine own, unspeakably important,—that, 'the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin?'" The atonement made by that blood avails for the pardon of every one who humbly embraces it, and at the same time tends to strengthen holy principles, and to promote universal obedience. He may also add, "In myself I am vile, polluted, and depraved; but in Jesus I am holy, righteous, and complete. Out of Christ, I may be condemned, but in Christ, I am justified from all things, and may challenge the universe to substantiate a charge against me."

Sweet to reflect how grace divine
My sins on Jesus laid
Sweet to remember that thy death
My debt of suffering paid.

Sweet on thy faithfulness to rest,
Whose love can never end;
Sweet on thy covenant of grace
For all things to depend.

But we all, with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory.
 2 Cor. iii. 18. *Let the same mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus.* Phil. ii. 5. *Leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps.* 1 Peter ii. 21.

IF, before we say or do anything, we would always consider whether it was agreeable to the pattern of Christ, a multitude of sins would be avoided. Lord, however guilty and miserable I am, yet, when I can humble myself before thee as the vilest of sinners, and look up unto thee by faith, depending only on thy free grace, I enjoy peace. Grant, therefore, O my God, that this beholding of thee may be my constant exercise, and that thus I may be strengthened cheerfully to follow thy pattern, and be daily more changed into the glorious image of thy love, patience, and humility, and thus be ripening for eternal life. The face of Jesus is a mirror, in which may be seen God's glory; and looking into this mirror by faith conforms us to the image we behold. So, as Moses, while in intimate communion with God on the mount, was transformed, and his face shone so brightly that the people could not look on him without being dazzled, we also shall be changed into the Divine likeness, from glory to glory, even by the Spirit of the Lord. Spirit of the Lord! daily place Jesus before my mind's eye!

This life's a dream, an empty show!
 But the bright world to which I go
 Hath joys substantial and sincere;—
 When shall I wake and find me there?

He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. Matt. v 45.

WHEN we are urged by the children of poverty to assist them, we do well to distinguish between the precious and the vile, between those whose petitions flow from necessity, and those who fly to beggary as a trade. To bestow our benefactions on the latter, would often be to sanction practices alike disgraceful to the individual and injurious to the community. Yet, on the other hand, we must not shut up the bowels of compassion even from the unworthy. While relieving the palpable wretchedness in which we may sometimes see them involved, we can scarcely fail to recollect, as a motive to our kind interposition, that, if God showed kindness only to those whose characters entitled them to expect it, the condition of the best would soon become forlorn and hopeless. It may be said, "Men of bad principles will make an ill use of your bounty." What then? The goodness exemplified under such circumstances assimilates us to our Father which is in heaven, who "sendeth rain on the just and unjust." This recollection, combined with a prudential regard to the best method of treating each particular case, will secure us alike from the imputation of harshness, and from the danger of encouraging idle and profligate habits; it will preserve our charitable feelings, without suffering the exercise of them to prejudice the community. "To do good, and to communicate, forget not."

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff comfort me.
Psalm xxiii. 4.

TO rejoice in the light of God's countenance is certainly most pleasant, but not always so profitable to every one, as sometimes to walk in the dark, nay, in the valley of the shadow of death. Some are more humble and cautious while walking in the dark than in the light; and glimpses of grace are then exceedingly precious; yet such should consider, for their humiliation, that darkness is commonly the effect of a wrong spirit and careless walk. O Lord, grant that when I am deprived of sensible comforts, I may yet be enabled to rely upon thy bare word, and in death may be refreshed by the light of thy countenance. Amen. Thou hast declared, "that the righteous hath hope in his death." Prov. xiv. 32. The shadow of death is often cast over some of the Lord's people, and they dread the thought of dying; but such have generally found, that the fear of death was worse than the reality, and that they have felt a thousand deaths in fearing one. Believer, Jesus will be with thee when dying, and his grace will be sufficient for thee. Live for Jesus, and walk closely with Jesus *now*, and leave death and all the future until it comes. Dying grace is for dying moments.

Numbered among thy people, I
Expect with joy thy face to see;
Because thou didst for sinners die,
Jesus in death remember me!

Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father; and attend to know understanding. Prov. iv. 1. We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen. John iii. 11. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God. 1 John iv. 1.

READER, let the following monitions, the result of long experience, and observation, designed for thy spiritual good, be acceptable to thee. Let "the life thou livest in the flesh be by faith in the Son of God." Labour after a constant soul-reviving fellowship with the Father and the Son, through the Holy Spirit. Watch over thy passions, conduct, and conversation, so that the Spirit of the Lord be not grieved, nor his comfortable influences withdrawn from thy soul. Be ready to every good work, as thou hast ability and opportunity; and take special care that thy good be not evil spoken of, through the manner of thy performing it. Let no external services whatever, either respecting thyself or others, make thee neglect a constant watchfulness over the inward motions of thine own heart. Let the written word of God be thine invariable rule, both in principle and practice. Whatever persuasion advances not the Redeemer's honour, and tends not to magnify his grace, work, and salvation, cometh not of him that calleth us. Be very earnest after meekness, humility, patience, self-denial, inward holiness, and all other graces of the Spirit; these carry their own evidence that they are wrought of God, and in their blessed effects will remain with thee for evermore. Daily pray for, and expect, the renewings of the Holy Spirit.

Open thou mine eyes, that I may see wonderful things out of thy law.

Psalm cxix. 18. *Lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death.*

Psalm xlii. 3. *For with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light.*

Psalm xxxvi. 9. *I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth in me, should not abide in darkness.*

John xii. 46. *The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind.*

Psalm cxlvi. 8.

MANY imagine that their eyes are opened, and that they have clear notions of religion; but they see just like Eve after eating the forbidden fruit; their hearts, being corrupted, are destitute of Christian simplicity and godly sincerity. For he that does not understand the word of God by the light of the Holy Spirit, through faith and prayer, but only through his natural reason, is certainly blind still, (Rev iii. 17); and one plausible temptation to error and sin is enough to break the strongest chain of human reasoning; it is only faith that gets the victory. (1 John v. 4.) The Spirit that inspired holy men to write the word, must teach us to understand the word, or we shall never enter into its meaning, feel its power, or illustrate its truths. "The natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." We must have spiritual sight to discern spiritual objects.

Light of those, whose dreary dwelling,
 Borders on the shades of death,
 Come, and by thy love revealing,
 Dissipate the clouds beneath!
 The new heaven and earth's Creator,
 In our deepest darkness rise,
 Scattering all the night of nature,
 Pouring day upon our eyes.

Without me ye can do nothing; abide in me. John xv. 4, 5.

I CAN no more do without thee, O my dear Saviour, than the branches can do without the vine! Keep me, therefore, always in thyself, that I may be effectually convinced of mine insufficiency, and with humble gratitude may acknowledge my boundless obligations to thy preserving and strengthening grace. May I never be left in the least thing to my own strength, but be directed, assisted, and blessed by thee in all my doings. As far as I confide in myself, I am distrustful of thee, and consequently weak: on the other hand, the more I distrust myself, the more I confide in thee, and shall be strengthened and blessed. My soul, never lose sight of this for one moment—thou canst do nothing without Jesus. There must be union to him, faith in him, and communications from him, or there will be no good works, no fruits of righteousness. Just in proportion as thou art living in close and intimate fellowship with Jesus, wilt thou be able to perform duty, resist Satan, overcome the world, and bring glory to the Saviour's name. Cleave, cleave, then, to Jesus, with full purpose of heart; never leave him for one moment.

Son of God, thy blessing grant;
Still supply my every want;
Tree of life, thine influence shed,
With thy sap my spirit feed.

Tenderest branch, alas! am I,
Wither without thee and die,
Weak as helpless infancy;
O confirm my soul in thee.

Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High, and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I show the salvation of God. Psalm l. 14, 15, 23. See also Isa. xxv. 9.

NOTHING moves God more to hear us than the glorifying of him by faith with thanksgiving, and the keeping up of a child-like confidence in him, as our reconciled Father in Christ; and nothing quickens faith more than sure promises of answers to our prayers. Thus God will certainly hear and deliver us, since all his dealings with us are designed to strengthen us in faith, and to save our souls. Why, then, should we be afraid in times of trouble? Ought we not rather to draw near to God in prayer and thanksgiving, and glorify him even beforehand; confidently believing that we shall certainly meet with new deliverances and fresh accessions to our faith? There is no uncertainty about this, for the promises are plain, positive, and sure. It is impossible for God to lie. Heaven and earth may pass away, but the word of our God abideth for ever. Trust the promise, or rather, trust the Promiser, and expect him to do as he has said. This will glorify him.

To what a stubborn frame
Has sin reduced our mind!
What strange ungrateful wretches we,
And God as strangely kind!

Turn, turn us, mighty God,
And mould our souls afresh;
Break, sovereign Grace, these hearts of stone,
And give us hearts of flesh.

Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Isa. iii. 10. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace. Psalm xxxvii. 37.

MANY are for having that first, which is not to be expected till the end. They would be glad of the triumph, but will not fight; the time of waiting for the Lord seems to them too long. But for the most glorious promises we must often wait the longest. Jacob, though indulged with more precious promises than Esau, was obliged to wait longer for their accomplishment; and how many ages rolled away before the promise of Christ, the greatest of all, was accomplished! "It shall be well with the righteous, and the end of the upright is peace;" but, for the present, they may remain in heaviness through manifold tribulations; when their faith, love, and patience are tried enough in the furnace, then the acceptable year shall come, and the blessed days of joy will appear.

Great God, I would not ask to see
What in futurity shall be;
If light and bliss attend my days,
Then let my future hours be praise.

Is darkness and distress my share,
Then let me trust thy guardian care;
Enough for me if love divine
At length through ev'ry cloud shall shine.

Yet this my soul desires to know,
Be this my only wish below,
"That Christ is mine!" this great request
Grant bounteous God—and I am blest.

Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart
Psalm xxvi. 2. *Search me, O God, and know my heart; and*
see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way
everlasting. Psalm cxxxix. 23, 24.

WOULD David, the man after God's own heart, not trust himself, but present his heart to the Lord, to be tried? Much less can or ought we to trust our hearts; "For he that trusteth in his own heart," says the wise man, "is a fool," Prov. xxviii. 26. We have more reason to be afraid of our own hearts than of all other enemies. It is not necessary for us to know when or by what means the Lord searches our hearts; but every one that is really in a state of grace, and walking in the fear of the Lord, will pray to him to search the heart, and to deliver him from every wicked way. The Holy Spirit has various ways of searching the hearts of his people, and makes use of different means with the same person. We are not to limit the mode nor the extent of his operations; but it is our duty to pray, that he will in everything guide us in the path that leadeth to everlasting life. Some may be wrought upon very differently from others; but the whole administration of these things is under the direction of infinite Wisdom, and tends to manifest the glory of Divine grace in our salvation.

Lord, search my soul, try ev'ry thought
Though my own heart accuse me not
Of walking in a false disguise,
I beg the trial of thine eyes.

Lord, all my desire is before thee. Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth; unite my heart to fear thy name. Psalm xxxviii. 9 and lxxxvi. 11.

ENCOURAGED by thy blessed word of promise, O Lord, that before men call, thou wilt answer, and while they are yet speaking, thou wilt hear, (isaiah lxv. 24), I now draw nigh to thee, and present my supplication before thee. Teach me, by thy word and Spirit, the things of my everlasting peace; let my soul be cast in the mould of the gospel, and let me be obedient to thy will in all things. Manifest thyself unto me, as thou dost not to the world; show me mine inward corruptions, and let me see to the depth of iniquity that is in my heart; grant me that fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom; incline my heart unto thy testimonies; lead me into all truth; help me to learn that he that believeth will not make haste; restrain the impetuosity of my natural temper, that I may do all things deliberately, as becometh one that feareth alway that is ever looking unto thee for direction. Lord, preserve me calm in my spirit, gentle in my commands, and watchful that I speak not unadvisedly with my lips; moderate in my purposes, yielding in my temper, and at the same time steadfast in my principles. Lord, grant me thy protection; and may thy blessing rest upon me, that I may not bring an evil report upon the good land, but walk honourably through the wilderness, and pass triumphantly over Jordan into Canaan. Amen.

Strive to enter in at the strait gate. Luke xiii. 24. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Phil. ii. 12. Forgetting those things that are behind, I reach forth unto those things which are before. Phil. iii. 13.

HE that feeds only upon Christ, and yet with fear and trembling works out his own salvation, is in the right way; the former preventing discouragement, and the latter presumption. Grant, O Lord, that I may still continue to fight the good fight of faith, and never look back on the flesh-pots of Egypt; and "rather choose to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." May thoughts of the painful death which thou sufferedst on the cross, have an abiding place in my heart; that thereby unbelief and slavish fear may be destroyed on the one hand, and security on the other; that my heart may be inflamed to gratitude and love, that my faith may grow day by day, and that I may walk, at all times and in all places, with holy and filial reverence, as in thy presence. O to be pressing forward, and reaching forth to greater attainments! There is much treasured up in Christ for us, and promised to us, not yet received by us.

Strong in the Lord of Hosts,
And in his mighty power,
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts
Is more than conqueror.

From strength to strength go on,
Wrestle, and fight, and pray;
Tread all the powers of darkness down,
And win the well-fought day.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Psalm li. 10. See Ezek. xi. 19, 20.

THIS petition will be fulfilled, if earnestly presented in the name of our Redeemer; and surely the object of the petition is unspeakably important. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," Matt. v. 8. In regard to justification, this is completed by Christ's obedience unto death; but in regard to sanctification, our hearts, though the subjects of it, are, in their best state, such, that we have continual need to pray, "Create in me a clean heart." O Lord, may thy blood and Spirit cleanse and sanctify me thoroughly from all my sins; that I may be purified and made meet for the Master's use, and may at length sit down with him in his kingdom. O for a clean heart and a clean life, that Jesus may be glorified!

Create, O God, my powers anew,
Make my whole heart sincere and true;
O cast me not in wrath away,
Nor let thy soul-enlivening ray
Still cease to shine.

Restore thy favour,—bliss divine!
Those heav'nly joys that once were mine;
Let thy own Spirit, kind and free,
Uphold and guide my steps to Thee,
The wand'rer's home.

O cleanse my guilt, and heal my pain,
Remove the blood-polluted stain;
Then shall my heart adoring trace,
My Saviour God, the boundless grace
That flows from Thee.

Enoch walked with God. Gen. v. 24.

HAPPY they who, in their early days, are turned from sin, themselves, and the world, by repentance towards God, and faith in the Promised Seed, as Enoch was, who, from the time of his conversion, walked with God in a continued progress. To "walk with God" is to come out from a sinful generation, and cleave to the Lord, as Noah and Caleb did; and God requires this of all believers. (2 Cor. vi. 17.) It is setting the Lord before our eyes continually, and fearing him always, as Joseph and Nehemiah did; thereby avoiding everything that would offend him. It is also making an open profession of faith in him, and zeal for his service, as our highest honour and best interest. And farther, it is such a walk as obtains a holy intimacy and communion with God, which is kept up by constant meditation, prayer, and praise, by our hearkening to the voice of his word and Spirit, and humbling ourselves before him; hereby holiness is promoted and encouraged in the soul. Thus "Enoch walked with God;" thus he maintained a holy confidence in him, committing all his ways to him, always expecting help from him, and rejoicing in the hopes of being with him for ever.

For these happy ends the grace of God is sufficient for all that see their want, and ask it. The Lord help us to seek it, that, like Enoch, we may walk with God here below, and live with him for ever in glory. Walking with God is honourable, useful, and happy. How can we be unhappy with God for our companion?

See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise. Be ye therefore not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. Eph. v. 15, 17. *That ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offence.* Phil. i. 10. See also Luke xii. 36.

BELIEVERS have nothing more at heart than the will of God; being once convinced of that, they immediately hasten to fulfil it, at all hazards; but sometimes they cannot come to a thorough knowledge of the same without great conflicts and much patience, (Heb. x. 36); having to encounter the errors which prevail around them, their own prejudices, and the occasional darkness of the Divine dispensations. The Lord, however, will carry us through. Yes, Lord, this thou hast done innumerable times. O that I might trust thee also for the time to come, and not be so weak in faith any more. In general, "this is the will of God, even our sanctification." In particular, "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." It is therefore God's will that I should live *for* him, and strive to be *like* him, and then go to live for ever *with* him.

Beloved self must be denied,
The mind and will renewed;
Passion suppressed, and patience tried,
And vain desires subdued.

Flesh is a dangerous foe to grace,
Where it prevails and rules;
Flesh must be humbled, pride abased,
Lest they destroy our souls.

Lord, can a feeble, helpless worm
Fulfil a task so hard?
Thy grace must all my works perform,
And give the free reward.

If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye: for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you. 1 Peter iv. 14. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for, behold, your reward is great in heaven. Luke vi. 23. Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father, who is in heaven; but whosoever shall deny me, him will I deny before my Father, who is in heaven. Matthew x. 32, 33.

EVERY real Christian must expect persecution from the world: and, though he should guard against giving needless offence by self-will, or rash conduct of any kind; yet should he not seek to shun the cross, by what some men call prudence, but which, in reality, is a mean compliance with the world; on the contrary, he should be willing to suffer everything rather than to hurt the cause of God in the least. We should openly confess Christ our Lord, and not mind being called fools by the wicked, as we know that at last they will call themselves by that name; let us not, therefore, care for the approbation and praise of the world, but count it a great honour to bear the reproach of Christ: even as Moses, who counted the reproach of Christ greater treasure than all the riches of Egypt. If we are reproached for the sake of Christ now, we shall be honoured by Christ by and by. For when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory.

Bless'd are the suff'ers who partake
Of pain and shame for Jesus' sake,
Their souls shall triumph in the Lord,
Glory and joy are their reward.

The Lamb shall lead his heav'nly flock
Where living fountains rise;
And love divine shall wipe away
The sorrows of their eyes.

Take heed to your spirit. Mal. ii. 15. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? Jer. xvii. 9.

SINFUL lusts may become so inactive as to seem quite dead: but, if we grow careless, they spring up again on a favourable occasion, and sometimes appear in a spiritual shape, and take a spiritual name. Thus, though the carnally minded delight exceedingly in sensual indulgences, yet, in order to acquire the reputation of being perfect, they will sometimes endure great mortification. Therefore we ought always to be jealous of ourselves, lest we become satisfied with a partial conversion, and thus exhibit in our spirit, language, and behaviour, a mass of inconsistencies. The flesh is never more dangerous than when it covers its lusts with the veil of apparent holiness and zeal. Oh, may I be taught to take heed of my spirit, and to know the deceitfulness of my heart. Gracious God, be thou my teacher; and not only my teacher but my sanctifier, that I may be sanctified through the truth! Thoroughly renovate my soul. Make me entirely new. Let the work be so powerful, so clear, that all that see me may acknowledge me, that I am one whom the Lord hath blessed.

Bound on a voyage of awful length,
And dangers little known,
A stranger to superior strength,
Man vainly trusts his own.

But oars alone can ne'er prevail,
To reach the distant coast;
The breath of heaven must swell the sail,
Or all the toil is lost.

O send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. Psalm xliii. 3. The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Proverbs iv. 18.

THE wiser we are in our own conceits, the more negligent we are in prayer, and more destitute of true wisdom and faith. The Lord gives sight to the blind, and to the babes who pray for it. Therefore the deepest humblings go before the greatest blessings. O my blessed Saviour, since I am always blind and ignorant of myself, if I am not guided by thine eyes, I desire always to look up to thee, and do everything under thy direction; sitting down like a little child at thy feet, and submitting my will wholly to thine. Give me so much of thy Spirit, that under all my trials, troubles, and conflicts I may say, "Not my will, but thine be done." Preserve me from dictating to my heavenly Father, or complaining of any of his dispensations. Lead me by thine hand, keep me at thy side, and whisper to me as I pass along, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." Conduct me to the hill, where thou holdest communion with thy people now, and at last raise me to the mount of God, to be for ever with the Lord.

Prevent me, lest I harbour pride,
Lest I in my own strength confide,
Show me my weakness; let me see
I have my power, my All, from thee.

Enrich me alway with thy love,
My kind Protector ever prove;
The signet put upon my breast,
And let thy Spirit on me rest.

By grace are ye saved. Eph. ii. 5.

TO rely on grace, and desire to be saved only by free grace, is a sweet exercise ; but, so far from being practised enough, we have all need to learn the prayer of the Publican better still, since the Pharisee is ever busy to creep in again. But care must be taken, that we do not build our faith only upon the sweet enjoyments of the grace of God in our hearts, but also upon grace in the heart of God, as it is procured by Christ, and promised to us through Christ. For which reason God sometimes denies us sensible enjoyments; that true faith may begin to act like itself, and depend upon nothing but free grace in Christ. All this we have the boldness to do, should we ever seem to fall short of the due measure of faith, godly sorrow, and repentance. For, since there is no merit to be placed in these things, there is no certain measure prescribed to all, but it is enough truly to hate sin, to desire grace, and sincerely to enter upon the Christian race. Enough to prove us Christians, but not enough to make us happy, or very useful Christians. Let us not be satisfied with what we have, while there is so much in Jesus for us ; but let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help us in time of need.

'Tis not by works of righteousness,
Which our own hands have done;
But we are saved by sov'reign grace
Abounding through his Son.

'Tis from the mercy of our God
That all our hopes begin:
'Tis by the water and the blood
Our souls are washed from sin.

Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law; and ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins. 1 John iii. 4, 5.

THERE is more power in the blood of Christ to save and cleanse, than in sin to defile and destroy. Hence it may be called "precious blood." When applied to the heart by faith, it diffuses peace, excites love, and endears the authority of him from whose side it flowed. Yet these effects are accomplished in the very best of mortals, in *part* only. It therefore becomes us all to be earnest at the throne of grace, that we may be kept by Almighty power, and that Jesus may be for us, who is stronger than all that can come against us; and that he may so manifest himself to us in love and in power, that we may enjoy an assured sense of pardon and peace; and, not only so, but that our hearts may be set against sin, and our lives be free from the open commission of sin. May we delight in the law of God after the inward man, as Paul did; and walk by the law, which only requires supreme love to God, and equal love to men. O to love God as God deserves to be loved! and to love men as God wishes us to love them!

Enslaved by sin, and bound in chains,
Beneath its dreadful tyrant sway,
And doom'd to everlasting pains,
We wretched, guilty captives lay.

Jesus the sacrifice became,
To rescue guilty souls from hell;
The spotless, bleeding, dying Lamb,
Beneath avenging justice fell.

Be ye not as the horse or as the mule, which have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee. Psalm xxxii. 9. If ye call on the Father, who, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear. 1 Peter i. 17.

READER, dost thou believe that there is a God, and that he will shortly judge thee for every evil action thou hast done, and for all the secret iniquity of thy bosom? How then canst thou meet thy Judge, unless thy heart be changed, and thy sins pardoned? There will be no opportunity of dissembling, excusing, or escaping them. Begin, therefore, in time, to consider how thou must appear before that awful judgment-seat. The door of mercy is yet open. Call upon the Lord Jesus for repentance and pardon before the door shall be shut, and thou be lost for ever. Now, but now only, is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. Thou hast rejected Christ hitherto; thou hast neglected the great salvation, it may be. Let me, then, beseech you to consider the question, which the Apostle proposes—"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" How? There is no sacrifice for sin but the one offering of Jesus; there is no remedy for human guilt or misery but his precious blood; there is no coming to God with acceptance but by him. How then will you escape if you live and die neglecting him?

O God, mine inmost soul convert!
 And deeply on my thoughtful heart
 Eternal things impress;
 Give me to feel their solemn weight,
 And tremble on the brink of fate,
 And wake to righteousness.

Be strong and of a good courage; I will be with thee, I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Only be thou strong, and very courageous. Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed; for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. Joshua i. 5, 6, 9.

GOD calls upon us to be strong in faith; and strong faith will make men cheerful and courageous, and enable them to overcome strong difficulties. Therefore, if thy feet and heart are bound for Canaan, trust in the Lord to carry thee safely through. Feeble as thou art, go on, and fear nothing; for God is with thee. He that has but this one care and fear, not to displease him, needs not care for or fear anything else. His safety is ensured in the promise of God, who will keep him continually in all things; who will sustain him by his almighty arm in every temptation and difficulty and danger, and will be a wall of fire to him on the right hand and on the left. My soul, fear nothing but sin; fear no one but God. If holiness is thy element, and God thy friend, nothing can possibly harm thee. All things must work together for thy good. Grace here will lead thee to glory in a better world. Trials and troubles will end in everlasting joy, therefore fear thou not.

Awake our souls, away our fears,
Let ev'ry trembling thought begone;
Awake, and run the heav'nly race,
And put a cheerful courage on.

True 'tis a straight and thorny road,
And mortal spirits tire and faint;
But they forget the mighty God,
That feeds the strength of every saint.

Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world!

John i. 29. *These are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple.* Rev. vii. 14, 15.

HE that washes himself continually in the blood of Christ, does not make light of sin, but detests it above all things; for what can be more abominable than sin, since it cannot be taken away but by the blood of the Son of God? This humbles true believers, and makes them watch against sin; and, if it has not the same effect on thee, reader, the state of thy soul should make thee tremble. Talking of the blood of the Lamb, and yet trifling with sin, cannot agree together, but show a false or a deceived heart. Nothing crucifies us to sin but the cross of Jesus: but this always does. Sin cannot thrive in Gethsemane or Golgotha. Blood makes it wither, fade, and die. And what destroys sin, nourishes grace; so that the believer who has much to do with Jesus in his sufferings, will be holy unto the Lord, ornamental in the Church, and useful among men. May I look away from everything below, and behold the Lamb of God.

Behold the Lamb of God, who bore
Thy burden on the tree,
And paid in blood the dreadful score,
The ransom due for thee!

Look to him, till the sight endears
The Saviour to thy heart;
His pierced feet bedew with tears,
Nor from his cross depart.

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. 2 Tim. iv. 8.

FOR this crown faith earnestly strives; yet the believer acknowledges, and will for ever acknowledge, that his enjoyment of it must be resolved into sovereign grace. For if he loves the Lord and his appearing, the Lord first loved him; and he ascribes all his strength, and courage, and victories to that Divine arm which alone brings salvation. Oh! to have the well-grounded and assured faith of the Apostle, and to be able to say, in the spirit of such a hope, "I know that my Redeemer liveth!" My Redeemer cometh. Jesus will soon come, according to his word, and will judge the quick and dead at his appearing, rendering to every one according to his works. Then the crowns will be distributed; then will every one have praise of God; then Jesus will be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe. Lord Jesus, hasten thy coming and thy kingdom; and may I, through thy free grace, receive glory, honour, and immortality then.

In hope of that immortal crown,
I would not now complain,
But gladly wander up and down,
And smile at toil and pain;
Still suffering on my threescore years,
Till my Deliverer come,
And wipe away his servant's tears,
And take his exile home.

Let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Heb. xii. 1.

HE that runs, and wants patience, will never arrive at the end of his spiritual race; for whereas every man will remove impediments from him who runs as an earthly competitor, he that runs in the way of God's commandments is liable to be constantly interrupted. One will revile him; another falsely accuse him; a third endeavour to intimidate him. David had many enemies that spake mischievous things against him, and laid snares for his life; but he was as a deaf man that "heard not, and as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth." Saul was twice in his power, yet he would not avenge himself on him: not that he wanted either courage or wisdom: moreover his malicious adversary was intent upon destroying him: yet he submissively committed his cause to God, and waited God's time of deliverance. Christ's active and passive obedience made him a complete Mediator: may thy active and passive obedience, reader, make thee a complete Christian, teaching thee to hold on in the Christian race until at length thou attain the prize. Grace gives it, the gospel reveals it, faith runs for it, justice will confer it, and the winner for ever wear it.

My hours, with undiminished force
And speed, pursue their destined course,
Obedient to thy will;
Nor would I murmur at my doom,
Though still a sufferer from the womb,
And doomed to suffer still.

Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. Rom. iii. 25.

GOD hath set forth the propitiation : from all eternity he proposed Christ to be the Mercy-seat ; the spring of all is from the Father, who is Love : he proposed, revealed, and made Christ known, to Adam, to Abraham, to the Prophets : he proposed the mercy-seat as an object of faith in all the sacrifices that were types of Christ : this mercy-seat is clearly and fully set forth in the gospel dispensation. In this plan the righteousness of God is declared, while he vindicates the honour of his perfections and laws, and maintains the authority of his government, by punishing the offences of rebel subjects in the sufferings of the Surety, who was made an Offering for sin, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Whither shall I, a poor sinner, conscious of guilt, and apprehensive of wrath, flee for refuge ? Where shall I find it ? Where, but in Christ's atonement ? While others have recourse to refuges of lies, and would establish a righteousness of their own, in the Lord my Righteousness I find rest and safety ; having fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before me : in Christ, my Hope, I shall have strong consolation. Him hath God set forth to be a propitiation for sinners such as I. My soul, look to Jesus as God's mercy-seat, expect to meet him there, and enjoy sweet and soul-refreshing communion with him.

No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon. Matt. vi. 24.

DOTH Satan tempt thee, either by pleasures, dignities, or profits? O my soul, stand upon thy guard, gird on thy strength with such thoughts as these: What can the world profit me, if the cares of it choke me? How can pleasures comfort me, if their sting poison me? Or what advancement is this, to be triumphing in honour before the face of men here, and to be trembling with confusion before the throne of God hereafter? What are the delights of the world, to the peace of my conscience, or the joy that is in the Holy Ghost? What are the applauses of men, to the crown prepared by God? Or what is the gain of the world, to the loss of my soul? The vanity of the creature is far beneath the excellency of my soul: and the things of time are not worthy to be mentioned with the things of eternity. Two masters of such opposite principles as God and Mammon, I cannot serve. Deign, blessed Lord, to employ me in thy family, and at the same time engage my whole heart, that I may admit no rival to thyself, but serve thee eternally, and thee alone. I give myself to thee, to be thy devoted and grateful servant, to do thy will, suffer thy pleasure, and honour thy name.

Thou seest my heart's desire
Still unto thee is bent:
Still does my longing soul aspire
To an entire consent.

O taste and see that the Lord is good. Psalm xxxiv. 8. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Hébr. xiii. 8.

THERE is an infinite fulness of all spiritual blessings treasured up in Christ Jesus for all his people; and out of his fulness they receive even grace for grace. But, alas! we are slow of heart to believe the truth: we please ourselves with small things, and come slowly forward to receive an abundance of that fulness. Young converts, enamoured with what they have in hand, or living upon their feelings, are ready to flee from knowledge as something dangerous, and destructive of holiness: on the other hand, some cold-hearted professors would explode all affection and animation, as though the passions had no share in the Christian religion, and that the whole consisted in a mere assemblage of notions. O my soul, be thou an humble suppliant at the feet of Jesus, for a live coal from off the altar, to purge away thine iniquity, and to warm thy feelings; implore also the aids of the Holy Spirit, to lead thee into the knowledge of the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. Then shalt thou both taste and see that "the Lord is good." Then shalt thou rejoice in the Lord, and glory in the Holy One of Israel.

O sovereign love, to thee I cry,
Give me thyself, or else I die!
Save me from death, from hell set free:
Death, hell, are but the want of thee!
My life, my crown, my heaven, thou art,
O may I find thee in my heart.

We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world to our glory. 1 Cor. ii. 7.

THERE are some things declared in the gospel, which are absolutely its own, which can be traced neither in the law of nature, nor in the law of God. Of this nature are all things relating to the love and good will of God in Christ Jesus; the mystery of his incarnation, of his offices, of the work of the Spirit, of our interest in it, and of our consequent union with Christ; to this class belong our adoption, justification, and effectual sanctification. These things are properly evangelical, being peculiar to the gospel.

The apostle Paul, to whom a dispensation of the gospel was especially committed, insists on these subjects with all his characteristic firmness and ardour. He felt their efficacy, and was anxious that all mankind should feel it also. Let us copy his example, and by the tongue, the pen, and the press, endeavour to spread abroad the knowledge of Christ. The gospel should be preached to every creature; and every one that knows it should assist in preaching it. May we spread abroad the fame of Jesus throughout the whole country.

Grace first contrived the way
To save rebellious man;
And all the steps that grace display,
Which drew the wondrous plan.

Grace taught my wandering feet
To tread the heavenly road,
And new supplies each hour I meet,
While pressing on to God.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.
Eph. i. 3.

WE are all naturally intent on present gratification. It is by no means sufficient, therefore, to explain to us our duty, or enforce it by future rewards and punishments. There must be pleasures at hand, to outweigh the enticements of sin, and outbid whatever that sorceress can offer. The religion of Jesus adapts itself to this prevalent feeling,—it brings the possession of the best happiness here; a rich foretaste, in this life, of heavenly glory. Salvation cometh of the Lord to the sinner, upon believing, just as an ample estate bequeathed to a person in debt; at once it alters his whole condition, setting him free from all he owes, supplies all he wants, gives him rank, figure, and authority, to which before he was a perfect stranger.

Such blessedness, in the pardon of all my sins, in access to God with confidence, in victory over my spiritual enemies, give me, O my God, to enjoy; freeing me from the sense of debt, and the fear of guilt, and every obligation but faith and love.

Let earth's alluring joys combine;
While thou art here, in vain they call;
One smile, one blissful smile of thine,
My dearest Lord, outweighs them all.

Low at thy feet my soul would lie,
Here safety dwells and peace divine;
Still let me live beneath thine eye,
For life, eternal life, is thine.

Spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. Isaiah liv. 2, 3.

HOW comfortable is it to the religious man to behold an increase of the true worshippers of God; and more especially in the place where his soul has dwelt among lions, and been “vexed from day to day with the filthy conversation of the wicked!” To see the banner of Christ set up there, and numbers flock unto it, as doves to their windows;—to see the kingdom of Satan weakened and contracted, and the kingdom of God and his Christ strengthened and enlarged; to see the hand of the Lord protecting and providing for his people;—going before them, like the pillar and cloud, refreshing them by day and by night:—this is indeed a feast of fat things. Lord, grant that I may be thankful for what I have already seen, and may I behold thy glory thus displayed more and more. And whilst thou lengthenest our cords, do thou help us to strengthen our stakes; by holding fast the form of sound words, living as persons professing godliness, showing that we are Christians indeed, by love to each other, and keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Thus shall our light shine before men, and the gospel break forth on the right hand and on the left, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. O to be used by the Lord, to bring souls to Jesus, and believers into the Church, and so to win souls from death!

If a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully, 2 Tim. ii. 5. Until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence. Matthew xi. 12.

IF those cannot expect to be crowned, who strive, but not lawfully, what must become of those who do not strive at all? O Lord, vouchsafe both to direct and to strengthen my soul, that I may glorify thee by resisting and overcoming all my spiritual adversaries. In humble reliance on thy grace, I will go forth, and fight the good fight of faith, till the happy hour arrive when I shall be summoned by the Captain of salvation to quit the combat, to leave the scene of watch and of trial, and I shall joyfully exclaim, "Thanks be unto God, who giveth me the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord." My soul, thou hast foes to conquer, and a kingdom to obtain. The armour of God must be taken, and the strength of God must be sought. No other weapons will conquer thy foes; no other strength is sufficient for thy work. But in the strength of God, with the armour of righteousness, the weakest will overcome, and the lame will take the prey. Take, therefore, to thyself the whole armour of God, that thou mayest be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.

Stand up, my soul, shake off thy fears,
And gird the gospel armour on!
March to the gates of endless joy,
Where thy great Captain Saviour's gone.

What though thine inward lusts rebel,
'Tis but a struggling gasp for life!
The weapons of victorious grace
Shall slay thy sins and end thy strife.

So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. Rom. ix. 16. Thou hast a little strength. Rev. iii. 8. Go in this thy might. Surely I will be with thee. Judges vi. 14, 16.

A LITTLE strength in the Christian is the strength of God through Christ the second Adam, and consequently stronger than the power of Satan and the first Adam, should it seem ever so strong. Nay, it is the death of the old man already, and kills him by degrees more and more, till at last, when we drop this body of sin, it will destroy him entirely. Believers in such a state may think themselves weaker than before they had any grace; not being able now to advance in their new and better course so rapidly as they did in the course which they have through grace, forsaken. They no longer swim with the stream, experiencing no resistance, but have incessantly to contend against the most determined opposition. Thus they are made to feel their own insufficiency; and learn both to ascribe all their past progress to Divine grace, and to rely on its continued communication for their future safety and improvement. Therefore we must not give over praying and hoping in this case; but, as it is only the loving-kindness of the merciful Redeemer that preserves and strengthens the poor and feeble, we rather ought to be more earnest in drawing near to him with all our misery, weariness, and apprehensions. God's strength is for the weak and feeble; and the weaker we feel, the clearer is our title to it, and the stronger our claim upon it.

If, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. 2 Peter ii. 20.

SOME affirm that experienced Christians meet with no strong temptations, and feel no evil suggestions from within, and, of course, no striving against the same: but it is quite the contrary; for young converts are engaged chiefly in escaping from the outward pollutions of the world, while those who are farther advanced find it necessary to strive more immediately against their inward and spiritual iniquities. Therefore take heed to your spirit, though your meaning be ever so good, and your assurance ever so great. Be not high-minded, for fear of falling. The least sin may, unawares, and by degrees, draw thee into many others, so that thou mayest at last be entangled in such a manner, that, without great watchfulness, it will be impossible to extricate thyself; therefore be not deceived, flee all occasions of sin. Say not within thyself, "It is a light matter, it only concerns outward things, which do not belong to the essence of Christianity:" such language betrays a most unbecoming levity, or rather a seared conscience. If we indulge any degree of improper conformity to the world, we so far supply the enemy of our souls with the means of ruining them, and may well fear that our latter end will prove worse than the beginning. Lord, keep me as the apple of the eye; hide me under the shadow of thy wings.

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.
Rom. xii. 18.

THERE is much contest in the world about property; but believers, taking Christ for their only Property (a property of which none can dispossess them), have, in him alone, immense treasures, and lasting peace. And since, therefore, wrath and anger turn into nothing but disquietness, and are punished by themselves, why dost thou, having so much to enrich and delight thee, suffer thyself to be easily moved by them? The least provocation, it may be, even a single word, will stir up the corruption of thine heart, so as to change thy countenance, and make thee speak unadvisedly. But, consider how God bears with thee, and what an abomination anger is. It is the venom of the old serpent. As for thee, called as thou art, to bear the image of God, and bring forth the fruits of the good Spirit, thou must follow the lamb-like mind of Christ. For this purpose it is necessary—First, To avoid all occasions of strife. Secondly, If quarrels arise, to bridle our tongues. Thirdly, To suffer patiently when we are wronged. Fourthly, Immediately to offer up fervent prayer, and thus to quench the sparks of fire, before they break out into a flame. This is the easiest and the only method to prevent great troubles, and lead a peaceful, happy life; for anger carries in itself uneasiness, and love a sweet satisfaction. Lord, preserve me from anger, wrath, clamour, and all that is opposed to the mind and temper of thy beloved Son!

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith; having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Heb. x. 19, 22.

CHRIST has for ever purged our sins by himself; “For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified,” (Heb. x. 14.) To this sprinkling of the blood of Christ, all believers, even the weakest, are to come, in order to receive the forgiveness of sins. The blood is said to be sprinkled, to show the need of its application to the conscience by the Holy Spirit. In this purple fountain the believer daily washes; it is the fountain wherein he is purified from sin and from uncleanness; it is his element and life. Thus he “lives by the faith of the Son of God,” who also loved him, always pleading his merits before his heavenly Father; thus he keeps his conscience pure and easy. My soul draw near to God through Jesus; stand not at a distance, as the poor publican did. Thou hast liberty given thee through the blood of Jesus to draw near. Thy God and Father invites thee near, and loves to see thee draw nigh unto him. Draw near and confess thy sin, obtain a pardon, and find grace to help thee in every time of need. Precious blood of Jesus, I will rejoice in thy merit and efficacy in life, in death, and for ever!

More of thy presence, Lord, impart!
More of thine image let me bear;
Erect thy throne within my heart,
And reign without a rival there.

That which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath showed it unto them. Rom. i. 19.

SOME things, declared and enjoined in the gospel, have their foundation in the law and light of nature; such are all the things which relate to our moral conduct. The apostle, speaking of mankind in general, says, "That which may be known of God is manifest in them;" the essential properties of God, rendering our duty to him necessary, are known by the light of nature. By the same light are men able to make a judgment of their actions, whether they be good or evil. (Rom. ii. 14, 15.) The same law and light which discover these things, do also enjoin their observance. Thus it is with all men before the preaching of the gospel to them. The gospel adds two things to the minds of men. 1. It directs us to a right performance of those things, from a right principle, by a right rule, and to a right end; so that they, and we in them, may obtain acceptance with God; hereby it gives them a new nature, and turns moral duties into evangelical obedience. 2. By a communication of that Spirit which is joined to its dispensation, it supplies us with strength for their performance in the manner it directs. Having this manifestation both of the authority and of the grace of God, let us walk constantly in the light of divine truth; recollecting that, in proportion to the extent of our privileges, will be the weight of our condemnation, if we remain either ignorant or unholy. But while the precepts direct our way, let us look to the promise for strength to walk in it.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. Rom. viii. 35, 37.

STARS shine brightest in the darkest night; grapes come not to the proof till they come to the press; spices smell best when bruised; young trees root the faster for being shaken; and gold looks brighter for scouring. Such is the condition of all God's children; they are then most triumphant when most tempted; most glorious when most afflicted; most in the favour of God when least in man's and least in their own. As their conflicts, such are their conquests; as their tribulations, such their triumphs. They live best in the furnace of persecution; so that heavy afflictions are the best benefactors to heavenly affections; and where afflictions hang heaviest, corruptions hang loosest; and grace, that is hid in nature, as sweet water in rose leaves, is then most fragrant when the fire of affliction is put under to distil it out. Rejoice, believer, in this glorious truth—nothing can separate thee from Jesus. Thy greatest trials will be overruled for thy good, and may often be numbered among thy choicest mercies. They only wean thee from the world, endear a throne of grace, and make thee cleave closer to thy Saviour. *In* him there is no condemnation; *from* him there is no separation.

Rejoice, believer, in the Lord,
Who makes your cause his own;
The hope that's built upon his word
Can ne'er be overthrown.

Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away ; for lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock. Solomon's Song ii. 10-14.

O LORD, how often has it been winter with me ; but thou hast always quickened me again ! Grant that by these experiences I may be so used to thy ways, as always to expect the best from thee in everything, and to have only this one care, how I may please thee as thy bride and dove, and be accepted through thee with thy Father. Let my faith be so strengthened by all thy dealings with me, that at last I may have boldness, and find complete rest in thy wounds, my crucified Saviour, where there is room for the greatest of sinners—even for me. My soul, Jesus calls thee away from self, from sin, and from the world. He says, "*Come away.*" He desires thy company ; he wishes to hold communion with thy spirit ; he desires to make thee happy with his own sweet love. Arise, follow Jesus ; go with him to thy closet, to his Father's word, and to thy mother's house ; let him have thy heart, thy company, thy all, for he is worthy.

The voice of my beloved sounds
Over the rocks and rising grounds ;
O'er hills of guilt, and seas of grief,
He leaps, he flies, to my relief.

Gently he draws my heart along,
Both with his beauties and his tongue ;
Rise, says my Lord, make haste away ;
No mortal joys are worth thy stay.

Be not conformed to this world. Rom. xii. 2. *And love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever.* 1 John ii. 15, 17.

READER, whose will dost thou do? Examine thyself. Perhaps thou thinkest, that to love the world, and do its will, cannot be a great sin, because many reputed honest men and Christians do the same. Nay, but for thy soul's sake, consider what the Scripture says—"If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Without this love of the Father, thou hast no faith; and, being destitute of faith, thou hast no part in Christ, and consequently no life and salvation. Consider further, whether thou dost not love the world above either God or thy own soul. Hast thou not more than a hundred thoughts about the world for one of God or of thy soul? Dost thou not talk a hundred times more about the world than about God or thy soul. Is not thy pursuit continually after the world, to the neglect of God and thy soul? If so, the world is thine idol; thou lovest not God, and art murdering thy own soul. Alas, what a piteous case thou art in! The Lord have mercy on thee! Holy Spirit, convince us of our true state and condition before God; if it is right, confirm us in it; if it is wrong, convert us from it!

Ye sinners, seek his grace,
Whose wrath ye cannot bear;
Fly to the shelter of his cross,
And find salvation there.

Not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance; but as he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy, in all manner of conversation. 1 Peter i. 14, 15. Give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles. 2 Peter i. 10; 1 Peter iv. 3.

NONE can be so sure of salvation as to be for ever free from fears and doubts. Confidence itself has its conflicts; therefore all diligence is required, in order to attain a prevailing hope, and to meet death with tranquillity. We ought at all times to guard particularly against presumption, since we do not know what temptations await us. It becomes us also to suppress the feeling that despises weaker Christians, and the language that would urge them beyond what they are able to bear; ever remembering, that our own experience is not to be stretched into an absolute rule for others, lest the doctrine of assurance, though a source of comfort, prove a torment to them who have not yet attained it. Let all who have received a measure of grace be thankful, yet not rest in it; but press forward, fighting the good fight of faith, till they lay hold on eternal life. If you indulge in any sin, it will make the eye of faith dim, and you will lose your assurance; therefore beware of sin. Good and gracious God,—

My soul with thy whole armour arm,
In each approach of sin alarm,
And show the danger near!
Surround, sustain, and strengthen me,
And fill with godly jealousy,
And sanctifying fear.

For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.
Luke xix. 10.

HE who seriously seeks to be saved both from the power and the punishment of sin, and seeks deliverance only through Christ, should by no means give way to heaviness of heart. For, consider; art thou a lost sinner? Christ's salvation is brought to such. Art thou seeking his salvation? This is a good token that Christ has sought thee, else thou wouldst not seek after him. Whom Christ seeks he saves. Now, therefore, call upon him earnestly to set up his kingdom in thy bosom, and say to thyself, O my soul, the very purpose which brought Christ into the world was, to save sinners circumstanced just as thou art! Though thy sins be as scarlet, yea, though they be as red as crimson, be not thou cast down, O my soul, and be not disquieted within me; but encourage a cheerful hope in thy covenant God. While mourning over thy sins, consider the infinite love of Christ in dying for them; and, constrained by a sense of that love, pray earnestly for the grace of the Holy Spirit, that thou mayest live to the Divine glory, accompanying thy petitions with a diligent use of all the means that may conduce to this important end. Believe the word, and you will come to Jesus. Believe in Jesus, and you will enjoy peace. Only believe, and you are safe. Believe, and you will soon be happy.

Did ever mourner plead with thee,
And thou refuse that mourner's plea?
Does not that word still fixed remain,
That none shall seek thy face in vain?

Repent ye, and believe the gospel. Mark i. 15.

REPENTANCE, or a godly sorrow for sin, is required by the gospel; it is absolutely necessary to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and a life of union and communion with him. O reader, the Baptist calls thee to repent; Jesus calls thee to repent; the God of heaven and earth calls thee to repent; and thou must repent, or perish eternally in the flames of hell. Canst thou not give thyself the grace of repentance? Thou canst not. Pray, therefore, earnestly to the blessed Jesus, that his Holy Spirit may produce this saving change in thee. Entreat him to give thee a living, justifying faith in his blood and righteousness, and that thy heart may be filled with real sorrow for sin, with holy indignation against it, and with a sincere and active determination to forsake it. Pray that thou mayest walk by faith, and not by sight; as seeing continually Him who, to the natural eye, is invisible. Faith will deepen and regulate repentance. Where there is no faith, there is no evangelical repentance; and where there is no repentance, there is no real religion. O for more faith in Christ, and then we shall have more repentance toward God! The gospel requires both, and Jesus is exalted to bestow both; and he does so freely, without money and without price. Make instant application to him for them.

'Tis faith that purifies the heart;
'Tis faith that works by love;
That bids our sins and lusts depart,
And lifts our souls above.

What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch. Mark xiii. 37.

ON a day set apart for the celebration of some great event, how anxious are the people to get in time to the place appointed; and what earnestness may be traced in every countenance! And should not Christians watch, with at least equal solicitude, for the hour in which their Lord shall come, that they may not be ashamed before him! A heart deceived by sin may suggest many arguments against this holy earnestness, but they are the reasonings of folly. The language of Christ is express, and continually urgent, "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." Almost every day affords an instance of some one hurried into eternity on a sudden. "You know not what hour our Lord doth come." Give me grace, O Lord, to live always as if I heard that solemn voice sounding continually in my ears, "Awake, ye dead, and come to judgment!" That so at length, when the Bridegroom cometh, I may be found with my lamp burning, ready to go in with him to the feast. Holy Spirit, make and keep me ready for my Lord's glorious appearing! O Jesus, may I meet thee with joy and holy triumph at thy coming!

O gracious God, on whom I live,
My feeble efforts aid,
Help me to watch, and pray, and strive,
Though trembling and afraid.

Increase my faith, increase my hope,
When foes and fears prevail;
And bear my fainting spirit up,
Or soon my strength will fail.

Now also, when I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not. Psalm lxxi. 18. O keep my soul, and deliver me; let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in thee. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee. Psalm xxv. 20, 21. Harken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb. And even to your old age I am He, and even to your hoary hairs will I carry you; I have made, and I will bear, even I will carry and will deliver you. Isa. xli. 3, 4.

GOD receives all his people into a union far more intimate than that which connects the parent with the child. A mother may forget even her sucking child; but the eyes of God are upon his people, for good, continually; they are graven on the palms of his hands, and dwell securely in his heart. They may expect everything from him; and we shall evermore please him, in proportion to the strength of our confidence in him. I would therefore "be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer, and supplication, with thanksgiving, make my requests known unto him," (Phil. iv. 6), always trusting that he will as certainly carry me through the difficulties to come as he has done through the difficulties which I have already met; so that I may even give him thanks for it before hand. O my God, give me faith to trust thee, love to cleave to thee, and indulge me with sweet and intimate communion with thy blessed self! My soul, grasp the promise, plead it, and expect it to be made good!

My God, my everlasting Hope,
 I live upon thy truth:
 Thine hands have held my childhood up,
 And strengthened all my youth.

Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these; but thoroughly amend your ways and your doings. Jer. vii. 4, 5. See also John iv. 24; Rom. xii. 1; James i. 27.

ONE of the most pernicious, and at the same time successful artifices of Satan, is that by which he induces men to substitute extensive knowledge, and an assurance of their own making, not witnessed by the Spirit, for true faith. Thus deceived, they trust in some outward form of worship, or in the church communion they have with real believers, and those strong and perhaps frequent feelings which they call Christian experience; but which, in them, are unattended with a change of heart. As long as this inward change is wanting, we read, and pray, and attend the sanctuary, and receive divine ordinances to no purpose. We must be renewed in our minds; and then, and then only, shall we prove, by our words and deeds, that we are the living temples of God. Reader, never rest short of union to Christ, and the renewal of thy nature by the Holy Spirit. It is to be feared that many do, and therefore are light, and vain, and worldly in their lives. True religion always includes tenderness of conscience, sorrow for sin, faith in Jesus, and a holy life. Have you these? Search and look, for it is for eternity. My soul, make sure work for eternity!

Be this my chief, my only care,
My high pursuit, my ardent prayer,
An interest in the Saviour's blood,
My pardon sealed, and peace with God.

Forsake me not, O Lord; O my God, be not far from me. Psalm xxxviii. 21. The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee. O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted; behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. Isaiah liv. 10-12.

SUCH as have never felt spiritual distress, cannot relish this word of promise. But they who have been brought out of great misery by this or any other word of promise applied to their hearts by the Holy Ghost, will henceforth take hold of it and prize it. Yea, they should firmly believe (even without a present feeling of its comfort) that God will certainly perform his promise. He is a God that changes not, and a God in covenant with his people. Therefore he will not forsake his people, but order all things for their good, and conduct them safely through their pilgrimage, though violent enemies assault them, and mighty tempests fall upon them. For this the Divine faithfulness stands engaged. Fears of being forsaken spring from corrupt nature, or Satan's temptations, and should, therefore, be resisted by every believer.

My God, for yet my trembling heart
 Would fain rely upon thy word,
 Fain would I bid my fears depart,
 And cast my burden on the Lord.

Thou seest the tempest of my soul,
 Those restless waves of fear and sin,
 Thy voice can all their rage control,
 And make a sacred calm within.

Lean not unto thine own understanding. Prov. iii. 5. Be not wise in your own conceits. Romans xii. 16. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. 1 Cor. iii. 19.

WHOEVER desires to know the will of the Lord, and prays earnestly for instruction, shall certainly know his will. But he must not be wise in his own conceits, nor lean to his own understanding, nor expect that the wisdom or learning of this world will explain the things of God. He must not seek to reconcile the word to his lusts, but combat his lusts by the word. In short, he must come to Jesus for instruction, with great simplicity of mind; and not come for a month or a year, but sit all his life at the feet of Jesus, to receive instruction from him. Lord, make me jealous of myself, enable me to go in and out with prayer, and keep me from all errors that may hurt my soul. Be thou my teacher. Give me a docile disposition, a retentive memory, and a good and honest heart, that so I may receive, retain, and make use of thy instructions. O for that wisdom which is from above, and is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy, and of good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy!

Thus saith the wisdom of the Lord,
Bless'd is the man that hears my word,
Keeps daily watch before my gates,
And at my feet for mercy waits

The soul that seeks me, shall obtain
Immortal wealth and heavenly gain;
Immortal life is his reward,
Life and the favour of the Lord

—*So we preach, and so ye believed.* 1 Cor. xv. 11.

THE method of the gospel is this: First, it proposes things which are peculiarly its own. It reveals its own mysteries, laying them as the foundation of faith and obedience; and it also fixes them in the mind, thereby conforming the whole soul unto them, 1 Cor. xv. 3; Rom. vi. 17; Gal. iv. 19; Titus ii. 11, 12; 1 Cor. iii. 11; 2 Cor. iii. 18. This foundation being laid, the obedience of faith is built upon it. Where this foundation is not laid, through ignorance, or where it is rejected, through prejudice, the gospel is of no service. It neither renews the soul, nor produces any genuine obedience. Thus the apostle Paul, in all his epistles, teaches first the mysteries of faith that are peculiar to the gospel, and then specifies those moral duties which are regulated thereby. In order that the gospel may be effectually believed, it must be dilligently examined, and well understood; and when our faith is thus firmly established, it is to show itself in the practice of all those good works that are required of us in the Scriptures. “As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.”

This remedy did Wisdom find,
To heal diseases of the mind;
This sov'reign balm, whose virtues can
Restore the ruined creature, man.

The gospel bids the dead revive,
Sinners obey the voice, and live;
Dry bones are raised and clothed afresh,
And hearts of stone are turned to flesh.

How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?

Genesis xxxix. 9.

JOSEPH was a slave, and in a strange country: he was tempted by a wanton and revengeful mistress; had he complied, he would have been sure of secrecy and rewards; but if he resisted, he might expect her keenest resentment, if not the loss of his life. Yet all these could not influence him; he chooses to submit to every inconvenience and danger, rather than be guilty of so foul a crime, and sin against God. Hence we may learn, that the fear of God is a most effectual preservative against all criminal indulgences; it was this that restrained Joseph, and will, where it is possessed, have the same effect on all mankind. It regulates every passion, every spring of human actions, and includes in it all the most powerful motives by which the conduct of mankind is determined. If interest be the principal thing that sways us, it surely cannot be so certainly promoted as by securing the favour of God, and avoiding his displeasure. If we regard our fears, he is the most formidable Being in the universe to a mind that has perverted its faculties, and transgressed the laws of its nature. If we are swayed by hope, he is the supreme Good; if by love, he is the most amiable and perfect Excellence; if by gratitude, he is the Author of all our happiness.

Give me, O Lord, such godly fear,
As feels thy presence nigh;
And looks to thee when sin is near,
And makes the tempter fly.

I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord.

2 Kings xxii. 8.

SOME have supposed that the priests, to save themselves the trouble of writing, and the people of reading, the book at large, had furnished themselves with abstracts of the law, leaving out, or slightly mentioning, some parts thereof, and particularly the threatenings; and therefore, that Josiah, when he made the discovery of the whole, was the more affected, in consequence of having been brought up without the knowledge of it. The book of God's law seems in our day also to be lost as it regards many congregations of professed Christians; imperfect accounts of it are given, which hide the promised blessings and the threatened curses. When this book by spiritual light is found, and, on reading or hearing thereof, conviction reaches the conscience, it is a great instance of God's favour, a token for good, and must be faithfully acknowledged as such. Reader, art thou truly apprehensive of the weight of God's wrath, and solicitous to obtain his favour? Seek earnestly, upon thy knees, and in the house of the Lord, redemption from the curses of the law; pray that Jesus may be revealed to thee. The blood of the Lamb of God alone can take away the guilt of sin; having therefore found the law, rest not till thou find the gospel also. Josiah's heart was tender; he wept, and was encouraged: refuse not to participate in his sorrow, so shalt thou receive favour, even as he did. Make the law of God thy continual delight and counsellor.

Draw me, we will run after thee. The king hath brought me into his chambers; we will be glad and rejoice in thee; we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee. Solomon's Song i. 4. In thee the fatherless findeth mercy. Hosea xiv. 3.

THE needle in the mariner's compass cannot rest till it points directly to the pole. The wise men of the East followed the course of the star which appeared unto them; and the star itself never stood still till it came right over the place illuminated by that other Star, which shone more brightly in the manger than the sun did in the firmament. Noah's dove could find no rest for the sole of her foot, all the while she was fluttering over the flood, till she returned to the ark with an olive branch in her mouth. So the heart of a true Christian can find no rest, all the while it is hovering over the waters of this world, till with the silver wings of a dove, and the olive branch of faith, it flies to Jesus, the true Noah and Rest of our souls, who puts forth his hand out of the ark, and, taking the dove in, receives it to himself. In his presence, and in communion with Him, the believer finds safety, strength, and the most exalted joy. Gracious Redeemer, let my soul find rest in thee, give me thine own peace, and render me happy in thine own love!

See! the dear flock, by Jesus drawn,
In blest simplicity move on:
They trust his shepherd's crook:
Beholders many faults will find,
But they can tell their Saviour's mind,
Content, if written in his book.

What think ye of Christ? Matt. xxii. 42.

OUGHT we not to put this question to our souls, when our happiness for ever depends upon him, and when without him we are undone to eternity? How then should we estimate the Lord Jesus Christ? Surely as the Scripture represents him to be, "the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." We ought to think of him in his person, as the great God incarnate; in his work and his offices, as the Saviour of Israel. We ought to think of him as one in whom justice is satisfied, love and righteousness are manifested, and sinners are saved. O how highly have God's people ever thought of Christ Jesus! And how exultingly do the saints now in heaven think of him! But what think we of Christ, when burdened with sin, when oppressed with affliction? When we cannot entertain a good thought of ourselves, can we then think of Christ as highly as heretofore? Yet this is the test that we must try ourselves by, "What think ye of Christ?" Alas! how very weak is our faith, at the best; Lord, strengthen our faith, inflame our love, enlarge our views, support us in trials, guide us by thy counsel, and receive us into glory, that we may sing thy praise to all eternity. Holy Spirit, so reveal Christ to me, as will fix my heart, soul, affections, and all upon him, this day, and for evermore!

Weak is the effort of my heart,
And cold my warmest thought;
But when I see thee as thou art,
I'll praise thee as I ought.

Our conversation is in heaven. Phil. iii. 20. Rejoice because your names are written in heaven. Luke x. 20. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. Col. iii. 2.

A CHRISTIAN, being only a traveller through the world, must expect a traveller's fare; bad roads, bad weather, and bad accommodation. But since his journey will soon end, and he will then enter the celestial city, all his actions, sufferings, prayers, and conversation, turn that way. O Lord, grant that mine eyes may be always fixed upon this mark, and that I may regulate all my desires and doings accordingly! Thus may thy grace be shed abroad in my heart, so that I may engage in nothing that is unsuitable to the anticipation of heaven. Give me a clear title, an habitual preparation, and many sweet foretastes, while I am sojourning below. Let me like the Patriarch live, looking for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. What a privilege to have our names written in the Lamb's book of life, to have our citizenship in heaven, and to live with the heart set on things above! This honour have all his saints; the poorest, the weakest, the most timid, the most unworthy.

Jerusalem, my happy home,
Name ever dear to me,
When shall my labours have an end,
In joy, and peace, and thee?

Why should I shrink at pain and woe,
Or feel at death dismay?
I've Canaan's goodly land in view,
And realms of endless day.

To Him give all the prophets witness, that, through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins. Acts x. 43; iv. 12. Thy name is as ointment poured forth. Cant. i. 3. The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe. Prov. xviii. 10.

IN this name we should draw nigh to the Father in prayer, and not approach him with a strange fire of our own, kindled from the fancied merit of devotion; and he will draw nigh to us again. (James iv. 8.) He will certainly grant our petitions, "and we shall receive, that our joy may be full." (John xvi. 24.) "Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee." (Psalm lxxxvi. 5.) All the promises are yea and amen in Christ; so that every believer may say, "The Lord will receive my prayer." (Psalm vi. 9.) "Blessed be God, who hath not turned away my prayer nor his mercy from me;" for "he hath dealt bountifully with me." (Psalm lxvi. 20, and xiii. 6.) Yes, for in Jesus he hath blessed me with all spiritual blessings, adopted me for his own child, constituted me his heir, and appointed me to fill a throne of glory. O the riches of grace, of free and sovereign grace! I ascribe it to grace, and grace alone, that I am out of hell, on the road to heaven, and expecting glory, honour, and immortality. From grace flows all the good, and to grace be all the glory.

Lift up your eyes to the heavenly seats,
Where your Redeemer stays;
Kind intercessor! there he sits,
And loves, and pleads, and prays.

In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. Psalm xvi. 11. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Rev. xxi. 2-4, 10, 12.

O MY dear Saviour, look upon me in mercy. Thou seest what earthly desires and unmortified tempers are yet found in me; and though I cry unto thee daily, mine enemies still prevail over me. Yet thou art almighty to save, and hast promised to cast out none that come unto thee. Let me, then, experience the power of thy grace in raising me up to more newness of life, in stirring up prayer, and strengthening faith; in creating hungerings after righteousness, and thirstings after God, and in bestowing a right heavenly mind upon me; that my soul may be as a bride prepared and adorned for her husband. Give me also a frequent taste below of those pleasures which are at thy right hand for evermore, that my heart may be kept eagerly looking for thy coming. O to be daily meetening for the inheritance of the saints in light! May my eye, my heart, and my hopes be there, because Jesus is there; and it is the sight of him, and the enjoyment of him, that will be the cream of all our pleasures. No heaven without Jesus, and no hell with him. Happy soul that can with confidence say, "Jesus is mine, and I am his." Holy Spirit, witness to my heart that I am his!

O the delights, the heavenly joys,
The glories of the place,
Where Jesus sheds the brightest beams
Of his o'erflowing grace!

Watch and pray. Let us be going. Matt. xxvi. 41, 46. Remember Lot's wife. Luke xvii. 32. This is the way, walk ye in it. Isaiah xxx. 21.

TO be kept from self-righteousness on one hand, and from false liberty on the other, is to be led in the right Christian way. But how shall I find this way? Blessed Jesus! thou art the Way. Teach me, then, to walk in thy strength, to live in thy faith, to gaze much upon thee, to cleave firmly unto thee, and abide ever in thee; so shall I experience the liberty of thy gospel, which yields no license for sin, but brings joyful deliverance from its power. For, when my heart rests on thee, it cannot rest in the flesh, and seek to fulfil its lusts; but, being delighted with thy beauty and glorious love, it ceases to wander from thee, and I become watchful, fervent, and animated. Rise, my soul, rise, and let us be going; this world is no home for thee. Rise from earth, from self, and from sin; rise to high and holy objects and subjects. Linger not, like Lot; look not back, as did Lot's wife; but press forward; urge on thy way. There is much land to be possessed, many blessings to be obtained, and great honours to be won. Onward, onward, then, until thou shalt hear the Master's voice saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

When my forgetful soul renews
The savour of thy grace,
My heart presumes I cannot lose
The relish all my days.

Walk before me, and be thou perfect. Gen. xvii. 1. Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Eccl. xii. 13, 14.

MANY things now accounted indifferent, will, in the day of final investigation, be condemned. Hence the necessity of circumspection, even when there is no apparent danger. We can scarcely consider our ways with too much attention, or scrutinize our hearts with too much rigour. Under the vain, presumption that certain pursuits and amusements are innocent, thousands advance into the snares of Satan and the very flames of hell. Conscience, perhaps, interposes with a scruple, till overborne by the suggestion that the measure contemplated, unquestionably agreeable, is also harmless; to this the heart, already attracted and engaged, yields a willing consent, and thus guilt steals in, and ruin follows. O Lord, grant that I may have a quick and clear perception of right and wrong, and that I may indignantly revolt from the latter, however pleasing to the flesh, and eagerly prosecute the former, at whatever cost and hazard.

Within thy circling power I stand;
On every side I find thy hand;
Awake, asleep, at home, abroad,
I am surrounded still with God.

O may these thoughts possess my breast,
Where'er I rove, where'er I rest;
Nor let unruly passions dare
Consent to sin, for God is there.

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. John iii. 3.

IN this solemn manner does our Lord teach us that no outward form of religion will suffice; but that we must be renewed by the Spirit of God, and have our hearts changed, or we cannot enter into the kingdom of God. How, then, can men who rely on their self-produced morality hope to be saved? Will Christ recall his assertion? Surely not. Much serious attention is due to this subject; so many being prone to satisfy themselves with an exemption from gross faults, or, at best, with such a performance of duties as may be compatible with an unregenerate state. All having sinned, conversion is necessary for all; and this results from that inward and spiritual change to which our Lord refers, when he says, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." My soul, hast thou experienced this change? Hast thou been quickened to feel thy lost condition? Hast thou been enlightened to see the requirements of the law, the provisions of the gospel, and the glory of Christ? Canst thou say, Old things are passed away, and all things are become new? Beware of a mistake here, for everything depends on it. There can be no salvation without a new birth, a new creation, a spiritual resurrection.

The second Adam shall restore
The ruins of the first;
Hosannah to that sov'reign power
Which new-creates our dust.

Why art thou cast down, O my soul; and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God. Psalm xlii. 11. I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Rom. viii. 18.

BELIEVERS, we are here assured, may be in great distress; but, though much perplexed, and often discouraged, they are secretly held up by faith, and brought off conquerors. If God had commanded us to pray and hope only till a certain time, and his help had failed to come within that time, we might justly despond. But, since he requires us to hope even to the end, or the last moment of life, this should keep us from impatience and despair; for, though he should tarry even to the end, believers will certainly find him then to be faithful to his promise. He may try our faith and patience to the utmost, but he cannot break his own word. Dear Lord, whatever load thou art pleased to lay upon me, enable me to wait, in faith and prayer, till the joyful hour of deliverance come. Give me patience, and a spirit of persevering prayer, that I may at last rejoice in thy delivering grace.

And can my vile ungrateful heart
Still harbour black distrust and fear?
O bid these heavy clouds depart,
Bright Sun of Righteousness, appear!

Let thy enlivening, healing voice,
The kind assurance of thy love,
Relieve my heart, revive my joys,
And all my sins and fears remove.

Be not soon shaken in mind. 2 Thes. ii. 2. *I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.* 1 Cor. ii. 2. *In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.* Col. ii. 3.

O MY blessed Saviour, enable me to rest humbly and quietly in thee, avoiding all such novelties as might breed presumption, distract my thoughts, and cause my heart to swerve from thee. Whoever has tasted the sweetness of thy Word, will be satisfied with it; and better it is to improve in the life of faith, and power of godliness, than in new words, forms, and professions. May the Lord quicken me by the truths that have been established of old, and humble my heart evermore, so that I may receive them better, and abide in that which I have heard from the beginning! Novelty often proves the bane of souls, and is always calculated to unsettle and distract them. It is work enough for the meek and quiet, to keep within the bounds divinely prescribed, and effectually to centre in God. How can such enjoy true rest, who, from a vain curiosity to know everything, are continually longing to hear new doctrines? Lord, save me from this mental fluctuation, and make me determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified. My soul, let God's word alone be thy guide and directory, and beware of, lo here, and, lo there.

Be all my heart and all my days
Devoted to my Saviour's praise;
And let my glad obedience prove
How much I owe, how much I love.

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sins. Psalm li. 2. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. 1 John i. 7.

UNDER the ceremonial law, all things were purged with blood, and without shedding of blood there was no remission; thus it is impossible that any one sin should be taken away, except by the blood of Christ Jesus. May this teach me the heinousness of sin, keep my heart humble, and my conscience tender. For, how dreadful must the stain of sin be, since nothing but the blood of Christ can wash it out! Blessed be God for opening this fountain, and keeping it open day and night for the vilest sinners. May my polluted soul be daily washed in it, and so receive both peace and strength. Ever remember, that whatever God does, he does perfectly. If he wash us, it is thoroughly; if he cleanse us, he makes us white. And when the Holy Spirit teaches, he always leads the soul to seek thorough work. Thorough sanctification, as well as complete justification. To be thoroughly cleansed from filth within, as well as covered completely with the robe of righteousness without. My soul, art thou seeking a thorough work? a thorough change of heart—of life? Look well to this.

My dear Redeemer and my God,
Fountain for guilt and sin!
Sprinkle me ever with thy blood,
And cleanse and keep me clean

Wash me, and make me thus thine own;
Wash me, and mine thou art;
Wash me, but not my feet alone,
My hands, my head, my heart.

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith. 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

BUT is there any need of such self-examination, when yet we preach Christ, and stay ourselves on his name? Alas! it is possible both to preach and profess him, yea to have a seeming confidence in him, and call him our Rock, and talk of his grace, and yet be lovers of sin, and haters of holiness; thereby showing that we have no interest in him, but are on the road to destruction. Thus Jesus hath told us. (Matt. vii. 22, 23.) Let us therefore examine ourselves. Is our faith in him accompanied with much self-abhorrence, in the view of our sinfulness and pollution before him? Do we prize him, not only for his favour to us, but for his own goodness, his grace, and his excellence? Do we love him, so as to love nothing else in comparison of him; neither self nor the world, nor pleasure, nor advantage? Then surely we are his, and he also is ours. These graces are the fruits of the Spirit within us; they are proofs of our faith, and of our union with him; and if we are united by the Spirit to Jesus, he will certainly own us before men and angels; he will never forsake us in time or eternity. But how dreadful will their case be, who habitually give themselves unto sin and iniquity, while yet they make mention of Jesus Christ, and wish to be thought his disciples! Keep us, Lord, we beseech thee, from such sad delusion. O give us to remember all our past provocations; and to know, to love, and to serve thee in sincerity! Make us like Jesus, in spirit, temper, and conversation; that there may be no doubt of our state.

*What lack I yet? Matt. xix. 20. Yet lackest thou one thing.
 Luke xviii. 22. One thing is needful. Luke x. 42.*

THIS one thing needful is, to have Christ; but he must first serve and treat us with his grace, before we can draw strength from him, to serve him again. We must account him our food, and hunger for him, before we can feed upon him or do anything for him. And, as Christ is the Author of faith, he gives it increase out of his fulness; and faith being somewhat strengthened, begins to work for him, though it be but faintly. Yet we become Christians, and remain in a state of salvation, not by what faith works, but by what it receives. For though a feeble faith will perform feeble works, it can receive a whole and perfect Christ; which is the one thing needful. If we have Christ, we have all things; but if we have not Christ, one thing, and that the grand thing, is lacking. It matters little what I have, if I have not Christ; and if I have Christ, it is comparatively unimportant what I may be without. Having Christ, I have pardon, righteousness, peace, holiness, the promises, and heaven at the end of my course. O my soul, look well to this point, that Christ is in thy heart!

Religion's sacred lamp alone
 Unerring points the way,
 Where happiness for ever shines
 With unpolluted ray.

There Jesus, source of bliss divine,
 Our glorious leader reigns;
 He gives us strength to hold our way,
 And crowns the traveller's pains.

Joseph is a fruitful bough: the archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him; but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; from thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel
Genesis xlix. 22-24.

JOSEPH is acknowledged to have been an eminent type of the Messiah: by bringing some circumstances under view, the resemblance will appear conspicuous and striking. Joseph was in a peculiar manner beloved by his father Jacob; Christ is the infinitely dear Son of his Father, God. Joseph was hated by his brethren, and they could not endure to think that he should have dominion over them; the Jews, Christ's brethren according to the flesh, hated him, and would not have him to reign over them. Joseph was sent by his father a long journey, to visit his brethren, and know their welfare; Christ was sent from the bosom of the Father, to seek and to save the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Joseph's brethren conspired to take away his life; the Jews said, "This is the heir, let us kill him," and they consulted to take away his life. Joseph was sold for twenty pieces of silver, at the suggestion of Judah; and Christ, by one of the same name, was sold for thirty pieces. Joseph was delivered to strangers, and Christ to the Gentiles. Joseph's being reckoned dead by his father, and yet alive, may be an emblem of Christ's death and resurrection from the dead. Joseph's brethren could not prevent his exaltation; nor could the Jews prevent Jesus being exalted, extolled, and set on high. He is Lord of *all*.

What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ; yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him. Philippians iii. 7-9.

THIS was the life and constant mind of Saint Paul. The expressions, "in Him," "in Christ," "in the Lord," occur, in his writings, continually. I choose them also for my staff, and my song in the wilderness; they direct me to my great tower, my strong fortress, my sweet paradise, mine only element and life. Here may I take up mine abode for ever; and may the Lord keep me steadfast. "It is good for us to be here;" for this is Pisgah, the mount of the Lord, where Jesus being transfigured, reveals his glory to his disciples. Here we should build our tabernacle; and here may death find me at last. In Christ we are justified from all charges, are entitled to all blessings, may claim all the promises, and are safe at all times, and under all circumstances. To be in Christ is true dignity and eternal security.

Had I ten thousand gifts beside,
I'd cleave to Jesus crucified,
And build on him alone;
For no foundation is there given,
On which I'd place my hopes of heaven,
But Christ, the corner-stone.

Possessing Christ, I all possess,
Wisdom, and strength, and righteousness,
And holiness complete:—
In his great name, I dare draw nigh
Before the Ruler of the sky,
And all his justice meet.

What must I do to be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. Acts xvi. 30, 31.

FAITH is not confidence of our own making, but it is God that produces it in a broken and repenting heart. This faith purifies us, crucifies the old Adam, overcomes the world, effects a change through all our faculties and feelings. True faith receives Christ as presented in the gospel, works by love, and brings forth the fruits of righteousness. All true believers have received it under a sense of godly sorrow. If we feel something of this, and apply to Christ by prayer for faith and grace, we have a sure mark of faith already; for, if we did not believe, we should not thus mourn and pray. He that daily applies to the blood of Christ for cleansing, has true faith and hope already, though he is but weak and does not taste any joy. Salvation is promised to believing, and the faith to which salvation is promised is simple confidence in Christ. Jesus has done all that is necessary to save us, and what he has done is placed to the account of every one that flies to and exercises confidence in him. My soul, dost thou believe in Jesus? Hast thou committed thy soul into his hands to be saved by him? If so, trust and be not afraid, he will save thee.

Ye dying souls that sit
In darkness and distress,
Look from the borders of the pit
To Christ's recov'ring grace.

In him shall Israel trust,
And see their guilt forgiven
God will pronounce the sinner just,
And take the saints to heaven.

Abstain from all appearance of evil; that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.
 1 Thess. v. 22; Phil. ii. 15.

LORD, I desire to shine in good works, the genuine fruits of faith: therefore will I give myself up to thee, to purge me, that I may bring forth more fruit. Looking upon myself as thine, I would not only abstain from evil, but from the very appearance of it. Some are satisfied with knowing that they *are* blameless, and care not what others think of them; but, for the gospel's sake, I desire to *appear* blameless before others, lest some offence should come through me, which, as far as in me lies, I would prevent. Thy children, O God, are as lights in the world. O pour thy grace, that heavenly oil, into my lamp; and so trim it, that it may give light unto all around, that they may be led to glorify thy holy name. O influence me by the Spirit of Christ, that I may live as Jesus lived, and work as Jesus worked. I would be holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, even as Jesus was. I would let my light so shine before men, that they, seeing my good works, may glorify my Father which is in heaven. O to represent Jesus in my spirit, temper, and whole deportment!

O Lord! my stubborn will subdue,
 Create my ruined frame anew,
 Dispel my darkness by the light;
 Into all truth my spirit guide,
 But from my eyes for ever hide
 All things displeasing in thy sight.

Let him that is athirst, come: and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. Rev. xxii. 17.

IF there be a sense of sin and want of spiritual blessings, and a willingness to be saved by grace, though you know not that it is Christ's secret power that makes you willing, yet being athirst and willing, you are invited; do not puzzle and perplex yourself with such questions as these: Am I elected? Have I a right? Am I prepared? But come upon the invitation; and take pardon, peace, righteousness, and every gospel blessing, as free gifts to the needy. If one ready to perish with hunger and thirst were invited to a feast, and assured of a welcome, and he should hesitate, inquiring, Have I a right? Am I worthy? would it not seem preposterous in him thus to demur, when his necessities were pressing upon him, and a plentiful table before him? The weary, the hungry, the thirsty, the guilty, the worthless, the vilest, are invited to believe on Jesus, who came only to save sinners, and has assured them, in his word, that they who thus come to him shall in no wise be cast out. Jesus never yet cast out one, nor will he cast out thee. Go to him and try.

The Spirit, in the word,
And in his motions cries,
"Come to the fountain-head of life,
And come for large supplies."

And whosoever will,
Is welcome to receive,
The streams of everlasting life,
That Heav'n will freely give.

Weep not : behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed. Rev. v. 5. The Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. 1 John iii. 8. Sin shall have no dominion over us. Rom. vi. 14.

MANY complain, that, though they will not turn back, yet they have no power to advance further. If this be thy case, my reader, remember, that the enemy of souls will discourage thee. But go thou on praying, and venture evermore upon the Lord. Consider how he awakened thee at first, how often he has since heard thy prayers, and assisted thee in many hard struggles. Surely he will help thee now also. If that will not do, begin, as it were, afresh ; acknowledge thyself guilty in every respect ; and, as the chief of sinners, plead for mercy, and be instant in humble supplications ; looking at the same time upon God as a reconciled Father through Christ, who is willing to pardon thee, and bless thee, in spite of all thy misery ; then thou wilt soon make a better progress. To despair of our own strength, is good ; but we must never despair of the power of Christ, who is risen from the dead, and will enable thee to overcome with him at last. He will certainly help thee in the due and best season. He has said, "As thy day, so shall thy strength be," and he will make good his word. The creature's day can never be a match for the Creator's strength.

Hell and thy sins resist thy course,
But hell and sin are vanquished foes ;
Thy Jesus nail'd them to the cross,
And sung the triumph when he rose.

Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? He chasteneth us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Heb. xii. 6, 7, 10.

TO these chastenings belong outward afflictions, which are precious means, and sanctified to believers. O my dear heavenly Father, thou art pleased with a true child-like confidence; but I have still a distrustful heart, which is soon overwhelmed by the stroke of sudden calamity. Help me always to entertain the kindest thoughts of thee, and to fear no adversity; looking upon it as a token of love, and not of hatred; and really believing it to be intended for my good. Whatever thy providence may order, let me not only be convinced of thy fatherly affection, but fall in with thy wholesome and kind designs. Send the Holy Spirit with every trial, to apply the promises, throw light on my path, strengthen my faith, and keep up my soul in prayer to thee. I need to be chastened, for *I am but a child*, and a wayward, refractory, self-willed child; and thou wilt chasten me because *I am a child*, and thine own child. O for grace to kiss every rod, and meekly submit to every stroke!

Why should I shrink at thy command
Whose love forbids my fears?
Or tremble at the gracious hand
That wipes away my tears.

No; rather let me freely yield
What most I prize to thee,
Who never hast a good withheld,
Or wilt withhold, from me.

The entrance of thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple. Psalm cxix. 130. Order my steps in thy word; and let not any iniquity have dominion over me. Verse 133.

WE may have a clear sight and a real taste of the gospel, and yet be soon deprived of the comfort of it again, if we do not walk in godly simplicity and poverty of spirit; for Christ will have none but humble and child-like disciples. But, if we abide in Christ, by a close and humble walk with him, we shall come to great and lasting assurance. For, neither a sweet sense of the love of Christ, nor even faith itself in Christ, is the ground of our salvation; but Christ alone, received into the heart as the Saviour. Faith does not save; but enables us to receive the Saviour, and with him salvation. Nor does the most delightful sense of the love of Christ save us; it only shows that the Saviour is present with us. Now the weakest true believer receives Christ as well as the strongest, though he reaps no present comfort from his faith. We must first believe, before we can hope for present feelings; and when we are favoured with such feelings, we must not make them the ground of our confidence. Christ, and Christ alone, must be the ground of confidence.

Order my footsteps by thy word,
And make my heart sincere,
Let sin have no dominion, Lord,
But keep my conscience clear.

Make me to walk in thy commands,
'Tis a delightful road
Nor let my head, or heart, or hands,
Offend against my God.

Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way. Psalm cxix. 37.

IF you were to see a man endeavouring, all his life, to satisfy his thirst by holding an empty cup to his mouth, you would certainly despise his ignorance; but if you should see others, of finer understandings, ridiculing the dull satisfaction of one cup, and thinking to satisfy their thirst by a variety of gilt and golden empty cups, would you think that these were ever the wiser, or happier, or better employed, than the object of their contempt? Now this is all the difference that you can see in the various forms of happiness caught at by the men of the world. Let the wit, the great scholar, the fine genius, the great statesman, the polite gentleman, unite all their schemes; and they can only show you more, and various empty appearances of happiness; give them all the world into their hands, let them cut and carve as they please, they can only make a greater variety of empty cups; for, search as deep, and look as far as you will, there is nothing here to be found that is nobler or greater than high eating and drinking; than rich dress and human applause; unless you look for it in the wisdom and laws of religion. Reader, reflect upon the vanity of all who live without godliness, that you may be earnest at a throne of grace, to be turned from the creature, and seek for happiness in the Creator. The poorest Christian, who lives upon Christ, and walks in daily fellowship with God, is happier than the richest worldling. Indeed, such only are happy.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. John xvi. 23. For the Father himself loveth you, v. 27. Before they call I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. Isa. lxxv. 24. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. Mark xi. 24.

HE that converses much with God in prayer, and has a child-like confidence in his word, shall certainly be heard; and these answers of prayer are undeniable evidences of the truth, faithfulness, and love of God: they also greatly strengthen his faith, and promote an intimate acquaintance with God. The more we receive, the more we are enlightened to see how much there is still wanting. This stirs us up to more frequent and fervent prayer; and the more we desire, (believing that we shall receive it,) the more shall we be gratified. Unbelief receives nothing, (Matt. xiii. 58,) but faith opens all the treasures of God, and never goes away empty. My soul, it is in God's heart to bless thee, to make large communications to thee; and therefore he has given thee so many, such exceeding great, and very precious promises. These promises are solemn pledges, given to assure thee that God waiteth to be gracious, delighteth in mercy, and rejoices over his people to do them good. "Ask," then, as Jesus bids thee, and "receive, that thy joy may be full." Ask in his name, and expect for his sake.

What various hindrances we meet
In coming to a mercy-seat!
Yet who that knows the worth of prayer,
But wishes to be often there?

If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. Gal i. 10. Let every one of us please his neighbour, for his good, to edification. Rom. xv. 2. A man that flattereth his neighbour, spreadeth a net for his feet. Prov. xxix. 5. But he that rebuketh a man, afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue. Chap. xxviii. 23.

WE are ever inclined to extremes, even when God has begun to make us wise, and to conform us to his own holy nature. At one time, we are apt to run into a false activity for the conversion of others, trusting too much on our own sufficiency and strength; at other times, we fall into remissness and languor. May the Lord therefore always guide me into the right course, so that I may walk in all singleness and humility of heart, as well as cherish true fervency of spirit, and steadfast faith, that it may be said, "I believe, therefore do I speak." Grant, O my dear Saviour, that I may shine as a light, and be useful to all about me; never seeking my own, but only the salvation and good of others, with unfeigned love. O that thy love may constrain me in all things! May I please men, to win them to thee, but never flatter them, or pander to their lusts. Teach me to rebuke in love, and whether I commend or blame, may I do it in the spirit of meekness, gentleness, and holy love. Lord, preserve me from all extremes, and teach me the happy medium, in all things, and at all times, so shall I correctly represent thy religion.

Father of mercies, send thy grace
 All-powerful from above,
 To form, in our obedient souls,
 The image of thy love.

whereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. 1 John. iii. 19.

THE evidence of our assurance of eternal happiness is that which every soul that makes any serious reflections on matters of religion pants after; it is therefore necessary to know upon what foundation this blessed evidence is built, and from what principles it arises; and these, I think, are chiefly, faith, love, and obedience; since no man can have this assurance, who does not feel in himself the principle of obedience; nor can he have obedience without the principle of faith; for it is a notorious contradiction, to imagine that any one can be assured of God Almighty's pardon, without obeying him; of his favour without loving him; or of the eternal enjoyment of him, without a firm and steadfast belief in him. But many mistake the nature of these things. True belief in God represents him to the mind as infinite in glory, power, wisdom, goodness, and all perfection; with such charms, such beauty, such loveliness, as to captivate the affections of the soul, and smite it with a divine love. True love reigns triumphant in the soul, engrosses all its affections, strips other objects of their charms, nay, makes them appear vile and contemptible, in comparison with supreme good. True obedience strives to please God, to resemble him, to render itself acceptable to him, and ardently desires the enjoyment of him. Holy Spirit, shed abroad the love of God in my heart, fulfil in me the work of faith with power, so shall I keep thy precepts, and be assured of my adoption.

He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. Matt xxiv. 13. Behold I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Rev iii. 11. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. 1 Cor. x. 12.

HE who stands fast in faith, and is of a cheerful temper, must not magnify the measure of his own faith, nor undervalue that of weaker believers; such conduct would declare that he is even now fallen into pride, and a contempt of his brother; therefore, however fast we may seem to stand, let us be wary and watchful. We are never so near a fall as when we grow self-confident. He who knows the nature and power of temptations, will not discourage the weak, nor insist too much upon particular enjoyments and sensible assurances, which are not the constant witness and marks of faith. The Holy Spirit himself is the earnest and seal of adoption, who is to be known not only by his joy, but by all his other fruits and operations. To trust too much upon feeling, disturbs our peace as soon as it is gone; but to rely on the word of God, preserves a settled assurance. Let what God is, and what God has said, be the ground of thy confidence, so will thy soul be steady, and thy obedience regular.

Child of heaven, by me restored,
Love thy Saviour, serve thy Lord;
Sealed with that mysterious name,
Bear thy cross, and scorn the shame;
Then, like me, thy conflict o'er,
Thou shalt rise to sleep no more;
Partner of my purchased throne,
One in joy, in glory one.

If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. Rom. viii. 9. See also v. 7, 8, 14.

NOT only gross wickedness, but even a carnal mind, and "the friendship of this world; is enmity against God." (James iv. 4; Phil. iii. 18, 19.) But how do I know that I have the Spirit of Christ? I have prayed for him earnestly; this cannot be in vain. (Luke xi. 13.) He works also hatred of and sorrow for sin; rebukes me, comforts me, and urges me to Christ and to prayer. This is his abiding witness, built upon the word of God, which no man of this world can have, but even the weakest believer enjoys. Having this privilege, I draw nigh, in the spirit of adoption, and fix my firm confidence in the parental care of the Almighty. Faith cannot be deceived when its foundations are fixed on the Rock of Ages. My soul, the Spirit of Christ always convinces of the need of Christ, unfolds the suitability of Christ, leads the soul to Christ, causes it to renounce everything for Christ, to build for salvation alone on Christ, and makes the man like Christ. Hast thou these proofs that the Spirit of Christ is in thee? Dost thou need him, approve of him, flee to him, trust in him, and daily pray and strive to be like him? If so, the Spirit of Christ is in thee.

Holy, and true, and righteous Lord,
I seek to know and do thy will;
Be mindful of thy gracious word,
And stamp me with thy Spirit's seal.

Within me thy good Spirit place,
The source of health, and love, and pow'r;
And grant me such victorious grace,
That inbred sin may reign no more.

Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly. Matt. xiii. 12. The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life. John iv. 14.

OF the remarkable increase of the kingdom of God, even from the least beginning, see Matt. xiii. 31-33, and that beautiful figure, Ezek. xlvii. 1-12. This well being opened, it highly concerns us to draw living water out of it daily, by fervent prayer, and then it will spring up freely. But, reader, if thou beginnest to be slothful, and distracted with worldly cares, not abiding closely with Christ, nor calling diligently on him, thy spirit will soon be dried up, and thou wilt scarcely be able with anxious groans to draw a single drop from this well. Therefore take heed to thy spirit, and, if thou desirest thine own comfort and God's glory, keep near the well's mouth, and drink thereof abundantly. Remember, there must be daily supplies for the soul, as well as daily bread for the body. Faith will not grow except it be fed. The plants of grace will not thrive unless they be watered. The fulness of Jesus is always open to thee; the invitation is daily addressed to thee, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." Art thou thirsty? Go to Jesus. Dost thou fear to go? He says, "Whosoever will, let him come and take freely."

The Lord my Shepherd is,
I shall be well supplied,
Since he is mine, and I am his,
What can I want beside?

Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Matt. xxv. 30.

LOOK at this man, to whom his Lord had given one talent! He could not bear the thought of using his talent according to the will of him from whom he had it, and therefore he chose to make himself happier in a way of his own. "Lord," said he, "I knew thee that thou wast a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed." But his lord, having convicted him out of his own mouth, despatched him with this sentence, "Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness!" Here you see what this man secured, by not acting wholly according to his Lord's will. It was, according to his own account, a life of murmuring and discontent—"I knew thee," said he, "that thou wast a hard man;" it was a life of fears and apprehensions—"I was," said he, "afraid;" it was a life of vain labours and fruitless travails—"I went," said he, "and hid thy talent;" and after having been a while the sport of foolish passions, tormenting fears, and fruitless labours, he is rewarded with darkness, eternal weeping, and gnashing of teeth. Look at the man with his five talents! Here you see a man wholly intent on improving his talents; his work prospers in his hand, the blessing of five becomes the blessing of ten talents, and he is received with a "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!" Lord, give me grace to use every talent, every day, for thy glory and praise.

Through desire, a man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom. Prov. xviii. 1. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Gal. v. 22, 23.

INTELLECTUAL and spiritual proficiency implies exertions which must for the most part be made amidst the tranquillity of retirement. There the soul escapes from the interruptions so prevalent in the world, loses its prejudices, finds leisure to open the stores of knowledge, and communes most intimately with its God. Those persons have little prospect of attaining true wisdom, who seek it only, or even chiefly, in the scene of public ordinances. The Lord was not in the strong wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire; but in the still small voice. (1 Kings xix. 11, 12.) The wisdom which he imparts is practical and engaging. It softens the character, permitting nothing to attach but what is lovely and of good report. It fills the possessor with sacred peace, and diffuses around him kindness and joy. It makes him like Jesus, the personal wisdom of God. O that all the Lord's people sought this sanctifying wisdom! Lord, give it me in great abundance.

May the grace of Christ our Saviour,
And the Father's boundless love,
With the Holy Spirit's favour,
Rest upon us from above!

Thus may we abide in union
With each other and the Lord;
And possess, in sweet communion,
Joys which earth cannot afford.

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another. John xiii. 35.

“**G**OD is love ; and every one that loveth is born of God ;” if we love one another as brethren in Christ, and love all saints as such, not because they are of this or that party ; and, if we love not in word only, but in deed, and show the truth of our love by works and labours of love ; this is a solid proof to ourselves and to others that we are real disciples of Jesus. It is a clear testimony that we have truly learned Christ, and that we have his Spirit and his love shed abroad in our hearts ; that we are of the household of faith, and shall enjoy all the privileges ensured to that happy community. This is a better evidence, and more convincing to all around us, of what we are, than all knowledge, gifts, attainments, and outward privileges whatever. O God of love, cause me to love thee, and all thine, the poor, the weak, and the feeble, as well as the strong, for all are thine. To this end shed abroad thy own love in my heart, more fully and more powerfully than I have ever experienced it yet. Thou art love, make me loving, so shall I be like thee, and bring honour to thy cause and name.

O let thy love our hearts constrain,

Jesus the crucified !

What hast thou done our hearts to gain ?

Languish'd, and groan'd, and died !

Each one by thy example draw,

And mutual love impart ;

Let kindness sweetly write her law

Deep in each grateful heart.

Watch therefore, for ye know not at what hour your Lord doth come. Matt. xxiv. 42.

TO watch is the wise exercise of a real Christian, who is sensible of his own weakness, loves his Saviour, and fears to grieve his Spirit; who is well acquainted with the depth of corruption in his fallen nature; is well apprised of the invisible powers of darkness, and hearkens to the voice of his kind and adorable Shepherd. This watchfulness discovers an awakened attention to our spiritual concerns, has the love of Christ for its motive, and is accompanied with a constant dependence on Christ, for protection from dangers, and for strength against all enemies, together with supplies of grace in every time of need. If our religion be only in outward profession, it may pass without watching; but if it be true grace in the heart from Jesus Christ, that sacred treasure will need to be guarded with the most anxious circumspection. The exhortation is to all God's children, necessary in every condition, in every stage of a Christian's life; in youth, manhood, in old age; in prosperity, and in adversity; in the seasons of consolation, and in times of temptation; in company, and when alone. O blessed Jesus, help me to watch and pray; let me be always ready; keep me in thy love, and preserve me by thy power, till my change shall come.

Arm me with jealous care,
As in thy sight to live!
And O! thy servant, Lord, prepare,
The strict account to give.

As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God. Psalm xlii. 1, 2. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fitness. Isa. lv. 1, 2.

THOUGH a degree of uneasiness is connected with thirsting and panting, yet, when considered as signs of spiritual life, they call for grateful acknowledgments, especially since they constitute a state of mind to which God applies great and precious promises. Wherefore, let not the hungry and exhausted despond, as though refreshment and strength would for ever be withheld from them. They are invited to receive a supply from the divine fountain; nor shall it ever be said, "You approach in companies too large," or "You ask too much." The Holy Spirit produces the thirst, which qualifies us to receive from Jesus, and then he leads us for the satisfaction of our appetite to Jesus. The thirst of grace is always definite, springing from spiritual life, it can only be satisfied with spiritual blessings. Christ, and Christ alone, will satisfy the soul that is really taught of God. If the Holy Spirit has led me to thirst for spiritual blessings, I shall never be put off without them, but my soul will continue to cry until God gives them.

See Jesus stands with open arms!
 He calls, he bids you come;
 Guilt holds you back, and fear alarms;
 But see, there yet is room!

How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? Psalm xiii. 2. Be careful for nothing: but, in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. Phil. iv. 6. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him. Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. Psalm xxxvii. 5; lv. 22. He hath done wonderful things; his counsels of old are faithfulness and truth. Isa. xxv. 1.

“**B**E careful for nothing,” is a wall against a thousand troubles. If, on the other hand, we give way to care and unbelief, they will spread their mischievous effects through all our actions. Therefore we ought, while prosecuting our lawful engagements, to rely, in all things, on the good providence and faithfulness of God; firmly believing that he will never fail to carry us through the most difficult and intricate circumstances, though there should be ever so little probability in our own eyes. But this we never can do, except we realize that God is present with us, cares for us, and listens to us. God, as our Father, wishes us to be happy in his love, active in his ways, and devoted to his praise; therefore he offers to take all our cares on himself, both for body and soul, for the present and future. O for grace to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, casting all our cares upon him, because he careth for us! If God cares for us, surely we may live in peace. My soul, cast thy every burden upon the Lord.

Here let me rest, on thee depend,
My God, my hope, my all;
Be thou my everlasting friend;
And I can never fall.

—*It is done.* Rev. xxi. 6.

WHEN Jesus bowed the head, and gave up the ghost, he said, *It is finished.* The arduous and important work of obedience and suffering which he had undertaken, in his mediatorial capacity, was brought to a conclusion. He could say to his heavenly Father, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

When all the redeemed are gathered, He who sitteth on the throne, beholding those he purchased with his blood, and brought to glory, rejoicing in these works of his hands, may thus express himself, *It is done.* The means and helps appointed for training you up, and preparing you for glory, are now laid aside, being no longer necessary; the scaffolding is now taken down, when the grand and glorious building, in all its parts, is completed. "That which is perfect is come, and that which was in part is done away." What depth of wisdom, what beautiful order, in the plan of salvation, and in the tendency of its various parts, to perfect the glorious work of redeeming love, agreeably to the eternal counsel of peace! How harmoniously are all the links of the golden chain connected! (Rom. viii. 29, 30.)

This is the doing of the Lord; and is it not marvellous in mine eye? When, receiving the Spirit that is of God, I see the things that are freely given of God, do I not see and admire Immanuel in the whole of the plan? Is not his eye upon me, and his arm around me? O amazing wisdom and love! O my God, I will live in hope of enjoying thy presence and glory for ever!

We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. Acts xiv. 22. Let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Heb. xii. 1. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. Verse 4.

SOME professors of religion are so careless, that they never think of striving against sin; and some would seem to be so holy, as to be above it; but here we are plainly told, that sin must be opposed. What St. Paul speaks of the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit is to the same purport. (Gal. v. 17.) And the most experienced Christians are witnesses to it. The word of God is said to be a sword, our prayers a wrestling, and our faith the victory. Thus our whole race consists in striving and conquering. There is always an enemy to be encountered, before we can make considerable progress in anything that is good; none of our enemies are to be overcome easily, but some are very stubborn. Therefore courage and patience are required; and thus we may be sure to have the victory at last. Thus shall we be enabled to fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life. O for courage, confidence, and final victory!

Awake, my soul, stretch every nerve,
And press with vigour on;
A heavenly race demands thy zeal,
And an immortal crown.

'Tis God's all-animating voice
That calls thee from on high:
'Tis his own hand presents the prize
To thine aspiring eye.

We are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past. Rom. iii. 24, 25.

HOW sweet are the words, "By grace ye are saved!" Here is an overflowing fountain of comfort and divine strength. How little are the generality of vain and worldly people, who still feed upon husks, acquainted with these words! How little are they relished by the self-righteous and merely moral professors of Christianity! But how deliciously does a poor hungry sinner fare upon them! There is hardly anything less known and understood as to the power and experience, than the mystery of Christ's suffering and dying for us, and justification by faith in him; though these things belong essentially to the gospel, and they bring into the believer's mind peace and joy. When such is their effect, sin is not only deplored, but subdued; and thus, faith, repentance, pardon, and a holy life, become associated, till that which is in part be done away, and that which is perfect, come. My soul, see to it that thou art justified, and justified by grace alone, through faith.

My faith would lay her hand
On that dear head of thine,
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.

My soul looks back to see
The burdens thou didst bear,
When hanging on the accursed tree,
And hopes her guilt was there.

See that ye fall not out by the way. Gen. xlv. 24.

JOSEPH, having shown himself fully reconciled to his brethren, dismisses them with this needful caution, "See that ye fall not out by the way." He knew that they were but too apt to be quarrelsome: one might say, "It was you that first upbraided him with his dreams;" another, "It was you that said, Let us kill him;" another, "It was you that stripped him of his coat;" another, "It was you that threw him into the pit;" another, "It was you that sold him to the Ishmaelites." Thus their journey to their father's house would be very uncomfortable, if this spirit of quarrelling and upbraiding once got possession of them.

Fellow-Christians, what a lesson is here for us! What says our Lord Jesus to us? "Love one another." Are we not all brethren? Have we not all one Father? Are we not all subjects of free and sovereign grace? Are we not agreed in essential points? Are we not all sinners by nature and practice? Have we not all one object of faith? Are we not all travelling the same road? Why, then, should we fall out by the way? The best and most enlightened see but in part, "through a glass darkly." Suppose we be of different denominations, yet holding the same head, why cannot we love as brethren? Suppose our way should part a little as to externals, yet, all setting out from the same spiritual Egypt, all under the same Leader, why may not we all hope to meet at last in the true Canaan? If Christ is our centre, all believers will be within our circle.

Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see; and ask for the old paths, where is the good way; and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. Jer. vi. 16. See also Matt. xi. 28, 29.

IN our own ways there is nothing but trouble; but giving ourselves entirely up to be guided of God at his own pleasure, we may always be easy, since we know that by every step he brings us nearer to heaven. The only way to rest, is the way of repentance and faith; in which we consider ourselves, from the beginning even to the end of our Christian life, as utterly lost, and condemned by the law, but as perfectly reconciled and justified through Christ. Thus to abide in him, to let him work alone, and be truly resigned to his ways, will certainly have the desired effect; while, by the righteousness and workings of our own hearts, we can never attain to it, and, which is worse, may be lulled into a false rest; or should we escape this, we may only do so to run to the opposite extreme, and be like the troubled sea that never rests. We never work for God to any purpose, until we leave off working for life; and seek, and find rest in Jesus and his finished work alone. If grace saves us, good works will characterise us.

Lord, I believe a rest remains,
To all thy people known;
A rest where pure enjoyment reigns,
And thou art loved alone.
A rest where all our souls' desire
Is fixed on things above;
Where grief, and pain, and fear expire,
Cast out by perfect love.

Ye are complete in him. Col. ii. 10.

THINK, O believer, with wonder and amazement ; reflect, with gratitude and love, that, while thou art deploring the common ruin of human nature, and mournfully feeling its sad effects upon thine own soul, thou mayest yet look through all thine imperfection, frailty, and unworthiness, to thy glorious Representative, and see thyself complete in him. The law which would condemn thee, he has completely satisfied ; the obedience which it requires, in order to thine acceptance with God, he has completely paid ; and that eternal life from which thy sinful imperfections must have for ever barred thee, is now become thine inalienable inheritance, as the reward of his righteousness, who lived and died for thee. Go forth, then, and glorify him in heart and life ; the more thou believest in him, the more wilt thou love him ; and the more thou lovest him, the better wilt thou serve him ; and till he shall remove thee from this vale of sin and sorrow ; let thy song, in the house of thy pilgrimage, be this, " Complete in him." " In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." Christ is my wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

Crosses and changes are their lot,
Long as they sojourn here ;
But since their Saviour changes not,
What have the saints to fear ?

Their safety's sure ; upon his breast
The loved apostle lay,
And there may we too find our rest,
Our confidence and stay.

Will ye speak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for him? Job xiii. 7. Thy word is truth. John xvii. 17.

WHEN Moses saw an Egyptian and an Israelite striving together, he killed the Egyptian, and saved the Israelite. (Exod. ii. 12.) But, when he saw two Israelites striving together, he laboured to reconcile them, saying, "Ye are brethren; why do ye strive?" So, when we meet, in the volumes of heathenism, or of anti-Christian superstition, with sentiments hostile to those of the Bible, let us (to borrow the language just cited) "kill the Egyptian, but save the Israelite." But, when we notice a seeming contradiction in the Bible, let us avail ourselves, as much as possible, of those aids by which we may be able to trace a real agreement. While we remember the solemn language of inspiration, "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent," (Num. xxiii. 19); and yet read, "It repented the Lord that he had made man, and it grieved him at his heart," (Gen. vi. 6); and again, "God tempted Abraham," (Gen xxii. 1); yet it is also said, "God tempteth no man," (James i. 13). Here and in many other places, we must be reconcilers, and distinguish between a change of mind and a change of dispensation, and a temptation of trial, and a temptation of seducement; thus, these two apparently differing friends will appear to be brethren, and agree well.

Thy word, O God, with heavenly bread
 Thy children doth supply;
 And those who by thy word are fed,
 Their souls shall never die.

And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, Hebron for an inheritance. Josh. xiv. 13.

ALL the spies that went up to view the promised land except Caleb and Joshua, made a formidable report of the gigantic inhabitants of Hebron, saying, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we." "Caleb" (answering well to his name, which signifies *All-heart*) "stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it, for we are well able to overcome." We are told, that "he had another spirit with him, and followed God fully." Moses, therefore, was commissioned to make him a grant of all the land whereon his feet had trodden, which was the mountain of Hebron. Caleb was eighty-five years old when he reminded Joshua of this promise; he was forty when Moses sent him to spy out the land; thirty-eight years the Lord had kept him in the wilderness, through the plagues of the desert; and seven years in Canaan, through the perils of the war. The city Hebron was already reduced, but the inhabitants had repaired to the fastnesses of the mountain; these he wanted to dispossess, assuring Joshua that he had now the same strength of body and holy confidence in God to engage in this dangerous enterprise, as he had at forty years of age, when he was sent as a spy. "Joshua blessed him"—acknowledged his claim and deserts, besought God to prosper him in his undertaking, and gave him the country; thus were his fidelity and uprightness rewarded.

And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne, unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon. Exod. xii. 29.

THE death of every first-born of the Egyptians contained so lively a resemblance, and bore so natural a relation, to their sin in destroying every male of the Israelites, that they must surely have perceived in it a punishment for that very cruelty; and, consequently, must have concluded, that the God of Israel took particular notice of human transactions, and, sooner or later, rewarded every man according to his works. The gradual increase of the judgments inflicted on Egypt, is somewhat remarkable, and equally expressive of the mercy and justice of God. The first four plagues were loathsome, rather than fatal; but, after that of the flies, came the murrain, which chiefly spent its rage upon the cattle; the boils and blains reached both man and beast, though there was still a reserve for life; the hail and locusts extended, in a great measure, even to life itself; the first by an immediate stroke, and both, consequently, by destroying the fruits of the earth. That of darkness added consternation to their minds, and lashes to their consciences; and when all this would not reclaim, at length came the decisive blow; first, the slaying of the first-born, and then the drowning of the incorrigible tyrant, and all his host. "Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty! Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."

Draw me; we will run after thee. Solomon's Song i. 4. *I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.* Jer xxxi. 3.

MANY and various are the ways the Almighty takes in bringing his children to himself, and to a knowledge of the things which belong to their peace. Sometimes he draws by the silken bands of love; sometimes by the knotted cords of pain and sickness; sometimes he urges them by the storm and tempest of his broken law; sometimes, and most effectually, by the display of their Redeemer's sacrifice. Reader, pray incessantly, that he may make thee sensible of the secret tender influence of his mercy. This habit of praying is very needful, because we are always in want; and without being instant and earnest we cannot receive much. Therefore it is not a hard command, but a great benefit and privilege; as if God should say, "Thou art a poor child, always wanting something; but thou must always pray to me, and I will always hear, and assist, and draw thee after me." My soul, art thou dull, heavy, lifeless. Here is a prayer just suited to thee. Thou canst look up to thy good and gracious God, and cry, "*Draw me.*" He who drew thee at first will draw thee again. O Lord, draw me to the garden, the cross, and the tomb of Jesus; and draw me from self, sin, and the world, to thy ever-blessed self.

O draw me, Saviour, after thee
So shall I run, and never tire;
With gracious words still comfort me
And be my hope and whole desire.

Them that honour me, I will honour; and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. 1 Sam. ii. 30.

THIS is part of the prophet's message to Eli, when he honoured his sons above God; he had indeed reproved them, saying, "Why do ye these things; I hear of your evil dealings by all this people." But he did not exert his authority in punishing them as they deserved, when they slighted his reproof. This was accounted by God as winking at their sin. He therefore acquaints him, by a prophet, that Hophni and Phinehas, as they had sinned together, should die together, and his posterity be cut off from the high priesthood. Eli was not much affected with his prophecy, till the threatening was repeated by Samuel, an artless child, who did not know the voice of the Lord till Eli instructed him. It appeared then much more terrible than from the mouth of the prophet; and led him humbly to acknowledge the justice of God, and to submit to the sentence with a truly penitent heart. This is written for our admonition. Are we valiant for the truth? Parents, let this be a warning to you, to train up your children in the fear of the Lord; for if you do not, those children will be thorns and briers to you, and will sorely wound you.

The Lord Jehovah calls;
Be ev'ry ear inclined;
May such a voice awake each heart,
And captivate each mind.
O harden not your hearts,
But hear his voice to-day;
Lest, ere to-morrow's earliest dawn,
He call your souls away.

Abraham against hope believed in hope. Rom. iv. 18.

O MY soul, thou hast not one single promise only, like Abraham, but a thousand promises, and many patterns of faithful believers before thee. It behoves thee, therefore, to rely with confidence upon the word of God. And though the Lord delay his help, and the evil seem to grow worse and worse, be not weak, but rather strong, and rejoice; since the most glorious promises of God are generally fulfilled in such a wondrous manner, that he steps forth to save us at a time when there is the least appearance of it. He commonly brings his help in our greatest extremity, that his finger may plainly appear in our deliverance. And this method he chooses, that we may not trust upon anything that we see or feel, (as we are always apt to do,) but only upon his bare word, which we may depend upon in every state.

Poor tempted soul, what canst thou do;
 Hope against hope, that God is true;
 His nature in his name confess,
 His wisdom, power, and righteousness.
 The Lord, whom now thou canst not see,
 Whate'er he is, he is for thee;
 Accept, and thou shalt surely prove,
 That God in Christ is only love.

Still then, on him thy spirit stay,
 Whose death hath borne thy sins away;
 Conform'd to Jesus in his blood,
 With him cry out—"My God, my God!"
 My God, my God, I hold thee fast,
 Till nature's latest pang is past,
 Into thy hand my soul resign,
 And then—Thou art for ever mine.

Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood. Gal. i. 16. *Be not slothful in business.* Rom. xii. 11.

THE speediest and easiest method to accomplish our desire of overcoming what is evil and doing what is good, is an immediate compliance with our first convictions, without conferring with flesh and blood. If we delay the work, we give room to fellow-sinners from without, and to Satan and our depraved hearts from within, to persuade us to the contrary; by which the flesh can easily renew its strength, and the spirit will be weakened. And what will be the consequence of this; but, that either we miscarry in our design, or that the conflict will be afterwards so much sharper; and the good work, if not stifled, dropt entirely; and, if it be done, it will not be done so completely, and with such singleness of heart, as it should be. If we narrowly watch our hearts, and directly engage with every the least opposition when it stirs, then our enemies will not be so strong, and we shall have no reason to despair. O for grace promptly to carry out one's convictions! Lord preserve me from consulting nature or feeling, instead of thy word and will!

Jesus, mighty to renew,
Work in me to will and do;
Turn my nature's rapid tide,
Stem the torrent of my pride.

Take away my darling sin,
Make me willing to be clean;
Make me willing to receive
What thy goodness waits to give.

Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead; and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.
Rom. vi. 13.

IF God has my members as weapons and instruments in his hands, I shall certainly be able not only to work, but also to conquer, since he understands full well how to manage them. May the Lord only give me grace not to wind myself out of his hands. For, how can a pen write alone, without being in the hand of a writer? It is true indeed, that it is very hard, nay, impossible, to be really good, and to do all that is good, if we undertake it alone; but God himself living and working in us, and we truly delighting in him, it is very easy and pleasant. Therefore care is to be taken that our hearts may be always the working-place, and our members the instruments of God, in which, and through which, he can perform everything himself. In ourselves, we are not sufficient so much as to think anything as of ourselves; but we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. Union to Christ gives ability, and daily communications from Christ enable us to do the will of God from the heart. Our good is all divine.

Now God I serve, to him alone
My thankful homage pay;
My only Master, Christ I own,
And him will I obey.

Servant of sin too long I was,
But Christ has set me free;
Glory to his victorious grace
Which freely ransom'd me.

The fear of man bringeth a snare. Proverbs xxix. 25. Be not conformed to this world. Rom. xii. 2. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 1 John ii. 15.

HOW many people swell with pride and vanity for such things as they would not know how to value at all, but that they are admired in the world! How fearful are many of having their houses poorly furnished, or themselves meanly clothed, lest the world should make no account of them! How often would a man yield to the haughtiness and ill-nature of others, and show a submissive temper, but that he dare not pass for such a poor-spirited man, in the opinion of the world! Many a man would often drop a resentment, and forgive an affront, but that he is afraid, if he should, the world would not forgive him. How many wish to be real Christians, and would carefully practise Christian temperance and sobriety, were it not for the censure which the world passes upon such a life. Others have frequent intentions of living up to the rules of the Christian religion, which they are frightened from, by considering what the world would say of them. Thus does the impression which we have received from living in the world enslave our minds, that we dare not attempt to be eminent in the sight of God and holy angels, for fear of being little in the eyes of the world. Reader, how is it with thee?—What can the world do for thee in sickness, death, and judgment? Make serious reflection on this, with prayer to God; and the snares of the world will be broken.

At the beginning of thy supplications, the commandment came forth.
Daniel ix. 23. *Continuing instant in prayer.* Romans xii. 12.

OH, comfortable and encouraging thought, that in the same moment that the supplication arose from the prophet's heart, the gracious answer descended from the heart of the prayer-hearing God! When we call upon the name of the Lord with simplicity and holy earnestness of soul, the return of grace and love meets our request before it has ascended half-way to heaven; and when the Lord is going to bless us, he pours out a spirit of prayer, and raises a cry in our hearts after the particular blessing he is going to communicate. Therefore, when we are enabled to pray earnestly, we may be sure that blessings are coming, and that we shall certainly receive in due time a seasonable and visible help. Then let us only go on, and put, as it were, one weight of prayers after another into the scales of the sanctuary; surely our greatest distress will, at last, be overbalanced, and salvation brought down. But it is well to be observed, that we must also be watchful, and not act contrarily to the intent of our prayers, which might provoke the Lord to disannul his grant, or at least to delay his help. But, when he tarries long, it is not his intention to give us a denial, but rather make us more desirous and earnest, that he may bestow the more upon us afterwards; for, this delay he will certainly well recompense, and grant us abundantly above all that we could ask or think.

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also to her husband with her, and he did eat. Gen. iii. 6. Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lusts, and enticed. Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. James i. 14, 15.

THUS one sin always begets another. By the eyes it rushes into the heart; from the heart it proceeds into the mouth, hands, and feet; from us it is transferred to others; and thus we go on sinning, and falling deeper and deeper. Therefore we must set a strict guard over our eyes and ears; be very cautious, and resist the least beginnings of sin, not making light of any; for, the least spark of worldly lust being entertained and cherished, we eat of the forbidden tree standing everywhere before us; and thereby a great fire may be kindled. But, having always our eyes fixed, in all our conversation, upon the presence of God in Christ, so as to walk continually in the light, and directly to quell the least inward motions of evil; they will never break forth into gross outward sins; but we shall daily grow in grace. May the Lord enable me to practise this good lesson, and watch himself continually over my heart, eyes, lips, and all other senses and powers of my nature. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. They overcome him by the blood of the Lamb.

With my whole heart I seek thy face;
O let me never stray
From thy commands, O God of grace,
Nor tread the sinner's way.

The preaching of the cross is to us which are saved, the power of God
1 Cor. i. 18.

O THAT I might always live near the cross, and experience its power, till I have obtained a complete victory! Whosoever was bitten by a fiery serpent, and looked upon the brazen serpent, lived. (Numbers xxi. 8.) Thus, always to look upon Christ crucified, is the one thing needful, from which all other blessings flow. (John iii. 14, 15.) May the eyes of my faith be fixed immoveably on thee, my crucified Saviour! For, as long as I live, I shall feel the wounds inflicted by the old serpent, and therefore have need to look unto thee continually. Gracious Lord, afford me cure day by day, with entire healing at last! My soul, look not at thy works, at thy feelings, or even at thy graces, if thou wouldst enjoy peace with God; but look to the cross. Poor superstitious persons may look at the crucifix, but I will look at the cross. The cross is the antidote of sin, the key that opens the heart of God, and the subject of the songs of heaven. If I preach, I will preach the cross; if I talk, I will talk of the cross; if I write, I will write of the cross; and if I sing, I will sing of the cross. The cross shall be my subject in health, my solace in sickness, and my joy in death. Cross of Jesus! I will cling to thee, and thus sail over the Jordan of death.

High on the cross the Saviour hung,
High in the heavens he reigns:
Here sinners, by the old serpent stung,
Look, and forget their pains.

The law is not made for a righteous man. 1 Tim. i. 9.

A RIGHTEOUS man is one who enjoys an interest in the obedience and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and whose heart is purified by the Holy Spirit. The law is said not to be "made for a righteous man," inasmuch as he is not the object of its condemnation; and also because he needs not, in the same sense, or at least to the same degree, as other men, those enforcements which imply alienation and uncontrolled depravity. He obeys from love, and would continue to obey, were you to suppose it possible for him to be removed from the sight and hearing of the law, and never to be assailed by those threatenings which roll their thunders over the sinner's head. He obeys, yet not he, but Christ which is in him, making him like unto his own glorious image. But if the law is not made for a righteous man, the gospel is; and it is the charter of his privileges, the subject of his meditation, and the rule of his life. It furnishes him with motives, presents him with models, and stimulates him with promises. The more he understands, and enjoys the gospel, the more he admires the law, rejoices that it is established by the gospel, but has no power to anathematize him. What the law requires of him, the gospel presents to him, and is consequently prized by him. We honour the gospel, in obeying the law.

How can I die while Jesus lives,
Who rose and left the dead?
Pardon and grace my soul receives
From mine exalted Head.

There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. Deut. xxxiii. 26.

IN these last words of Moses we have the glory of God set forth, in the communication of good to God's Israel. God has created the whole universe for himself. His throne is heaven, where he makes the chief display of his dignity and dominion. The scenes with which we are conversant, subject as they are to such continual changes and revolutions, may be compared to the wheels of his chariot. His providence is represented by the motion of the wheels; he brings to pass his own counsels in the lower world, and manages and directs all, as a man does his chariot, which he turns as it pleases him. How safe, then, must they be who are under the wing of the God of Jeshurun, who find him reconciled to them by the death of his Son, and feel themselves reconciled to him by the power of his grace! "He rideth on the heavens for their help;" and none can outstrip his progress, or overturn his purpose. "He it is that giveth strength and victory to his people; blessed be God!" Reader, is the God of Jeshurun, the God of Israel, thy God? Is he who rideth on the heavens thy help? Does thy heart trust in him alone, and his grace subdue thine outward iniquities, and thine inbred corruptions? Then, whatever be thy outward condition, thou art secure from the *worst* evils, and shalt soon be delivered from *all*. But except the God of Jeshurun be thine help, thou art in imminent peril.

Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have. Heb. xiii. 5. For, they that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition: for the love of money is the root of all evil. 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.

A COVETOUS man is called an idolater, and has no part in the kingdom of God; but who believes that he is covetous? The charge attaches to every one who is not content with what he has. And what says the Apostle of such as will be rich? They fall. Not only they may fall, but they actually do fall; nor can the fall be avoided, if men are determined that they will be rich. O reader, it is fit that thou shouldst take alarm! Get the covetous desires of thy heart subdued, and kept disentangled from worldly things; for who knows how soon thou must go out of this world, and leave everything behind? Away from it with thy heart, else thy death will be very hard. The Christian's motto is, God and enough: for he that has God, is content; and, consequently, always rich enough, even in poverty. He must be a covetous man indeed, who has not enough, having God. O Lord, make me so free by faith from the love of earthly things, that I may equally praise thee, whether thou be pleased to give me something, or take it away from me; and that I may never covetously refuse that to others or to myself, which thou has given for my own and my neighbour's comfort. O Jesus, let me so realize thee as mine, as to rise superior to all temporal things, rejoicing in thee as my portion!

The soul of the diligent shall be made fat. Prov. xiii. 4.

YOU are concerned for having no more grace. What is the reason? Perhaps you are indolent, careless, and unfaithful; and, though you have no warrant even for an hour to live, yet you unreasonably suppose that you have time enough; therefore you are not serious, diligent, and fervent in prayer for sufficient strength to be always prepared, and have boldness in death. No wonder, if you do not immediately resist sin, that it grows strong, and you are always weak and discouraged. And how can you expect to receive more grace, if you do not faithfully improve what little you have? If you would but diligently and faithfully apply yourself to the word and prayer, God would certainly not be wanting on his part to fulfil his promises, and give you enough. It is well to be observed, and we must know it once for all, that there is no such thing as making any progress in grace, and carrying our point, unless we are mindful of ourselves, watching and praying against all sins, and whatever may be a hinderance, on the one hand, and following with all diligence that which is good, and what may be a furtherance, on the other. It is not enough to use *some*, we must use *all* diligence; and, according as our grace is increased, our diligence must increase also, since it goes against the stream. O for more sanctifying grace!

Well to resist the sinful power
Requires a strong restraint;
We must be watchful every hour,
And pray, but never faint.

In lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves Phil. ii. 3. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For, if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. Gal. vi. 2—4.

IF we were truly humble, and looked upon ourselves as most miserable sinners, we should willingly submit to all adversities, and patiently bear the burden and infirmities of others, considering that God has borne with us a great deal more. Observing, therefore, the faults of our neighbour, we must not forget our own. Perhaps in other things we are weaker than he. This will restrain us from judging rashly, or speaking unadvisedly to others; but first we should speak to God about it, and then try with gentle means to improve those whom we may think worthy of blame. Nay, the best method is to consider our neighbour on the good, and ourselves on the bad side; and to see whether we cannot apologize for him, and have not reason severely to condemn ourselves. If his fault admits of no excuse, still we must not suffer him to stir up our corruption, but plead affectionately for him before the throne of our forgiving God. It is very easy to find fault with others, but to show love, and restore them by prayer and brotherly correction, is quite another thing. Lord, teach me to love my neighbour as myself!

Love lays her own advantage by,
To seek her neighbour's good;
So God's own Son came down to die,
And bought our lives with blood.

Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.
Psalm cxlv. 16.

WHO considers these words with sufficient care, and practically draws from them the right conclusions? The hand of God being my chief provision and storehouse, is it not a shame to be anxiously careful for anything? Has the Lord all things in his hand? Then surely I shall receive what he has for me; none will be able to withhold it. Faith has always a free access to the treasures of God, who is never wanting. Christians have their treasures in such a high place, even in God, that no thief can rob them; and they are sure to have enough in God. Though the Lord should try them with want a little while, yet he relieves them in due season: their bread shall fall from heaven, rather than they shall be left without it. You need not, says Christ, seek these other things; they shall be brought to you, if ye only abide in me. If this does not comfort and strengthen us, nothing else will. Many rely on their ample worldly stores: but, if they had true faith, this would be their confidence and joy, that God has engaged to supply all their need. If the Lord is pleased to bestow on his servants any particular expression of his providential bounty, they are thankful, and make a proper use of it; but if he withholds what they ask for, they learn cheerfully to submit. "My God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ." "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content." Christ, and plain living, is true prosperity.

And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests, the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense. Go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed, neither shall it be for thine honour from the Lord God. 2 Chron. xxvi. 18.

HERE is the only blot we find on the name of Uzziah. As long as he sought the Lord, and worshipped him according to Divine appointment, God made him to prosper. God helped him "marvellously till he was strong;" but, when he was strong, his heart was lifted up, to his own destruction. He was not content with the honours God had put upon him, but would usurp those that were forbidden him, like our first parents. The chief priest, and other priests, were ready to burn incense for the king, according to the duty of their office, and plainly acquainted him, that if through a mistaken zeal he offered to do it himself, he would incur the wrath of God, and suffer for it: but this served only to excite his wrath, till he felt the judgment of God's hand in his punishment. Though he strove with the priests, he could not strive with his Maker, but retired as soon as he was smitten with the leprosy. We here see that the God we have to do with is a jealous God, who expects that all who serve him shall do it according to his own institutions. Dost thou, reader, come to him in the way of his appointment? Take care that thou come not with the unhallowed fire before the Lord, lest thou be also smitten. Come only through Jesus, the great High Priest, and thou art safe.

He will beautify the meek with salvation. Psalm cxlix. 4. If ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye. 1 Peter iii. 14. Psalm x. 17; xxii. 26; xxxvii. 11; xlviii. 10. Isaiah liv. 11.

ALL this is for the humble and poor in spirit. But how can we be both poor and blessed? The answer is obvious. We are poor in ourselves, but become blessed in Christ. If we derive no happiness from him, it is because we are not truly sensible of our own insufficiency and wretchedness. When we are brought low, let us confidently lay hold on Christ, and we shall be blessed: for all is ours. We may say, O Lord, if thou art a glorious Help to the needy, lo! here are want and misery enough; therefore I come, with all my want and poverty, to the riches of thy grace; with all my darkness, to thy light; with the body of this death, to thee, the Fountain of life. Grant that all evils may be swallowed up in the fulness of thy love. Mine innumerable wants I set before thee, as so many empty vessels, and desire to have them filled with thy spiritual and heavenly blessings. O glorify thy free grace, in my poverty and emptiness! Fill me with thyself. O fill me with all the fulness of God!

O might I hear thy heavenly tongue
But whisper "Thou art mine!"
Those gentle words should raise my song
To notes almost divine.

How would my leaping heart rejoice,
And think my heaven secure!
I trust the all-creating voice,
And faith desires no more.

Be renewed in the spirit of your mind. Eph. iv. 23.

O LORD, grant me daily repentance, and a tender feeling of my sins, that by the power of thy death the old man may be crucified, and by the power of thy resurrection, the new man may rise up, and grow in grace, being filled and refreshed with the fruits of thy Spirit. Let me ever be earnest, and look upon every day as the very first and the very last; that with each I may, as it were, begin anew to work out my salvation with fear and trembling, and so be always prepared for death and eternity. Give me grace to surmount all difficulties, and to avoid everything that may prove a torment to my conscience in the hour of death. And, as there is no standing still, I humbly beseech thee to stir me up daily and hourly more and more, that I may make all haste, and “give all diligence to make my calling and election sure.” Spirit of God, let me daily experience thy divine operations, thy renewing influences, for I shall never be renewed in the spirit of my mind apart from thy presence, power, and work! Thou hast begun a good work in me; O carry it on, and complete it in the day of Christ! Thou hast given me the desire to be like Jesus, now gratify that desire, and grant that as he is, so I may be in this world.

Soon as we draw our infant breath,
The seeds of sin grow up for death;
The law demands a perfect heart,
But we're defiled in every part.

Great God! create my heart anew,
And form my spirit pure and true;
O make me wise betimes, to spy
My danger and my remedy.

He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor: his righteousness endureth for ever. Psalm cxii. 9. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand. Eccles. xi. 6.

THOSE that lay up treasures on earth, put out all that they can spare to interest; and those that desire to reap soon and plentifully, are careful to sow accordingly. Let us imitate them in our charitable distributions. We must not pretend to pay the debt of charity with some poor mites and pence. If you will give something, give bountifully; take your hands full as if you were sowing, like the poor widow with her two mites, which she sowed freely, though it was her whole substance. But the rich ones were not so liberal, but covetously offered only what they could spare very well. Is it not said, we should sow? Now, seedsmen sow with hands full, and so should we: for God loveth a cheerful giver, and will in his turn dispense again bountifully to you, that ye should have sufficiency in all things to every good work: but God dispenseth so bountifully to you, why should you then grudge him anything, or make only such poor returns? For what we do to our neighbour, is the same as if it were done to God himself, if done in faith and love. How gracious his condescension who accepts such service, and esteems it at such a price! Lord, give me a truly liberal spirit, and enable me to imitate Jesus in his benevolence!

Awake, my zeal; awake, my love,
And serve my Saviour here below,
In works which all the saints above
And holy angels cannot do.

He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities. Psalm cxxx. 8. O the Hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble. Jer. xiv. 8. In wrath remember mercy. Habak. iii. 2.

DESPAIR not, O my soul, in any tribulation or conflict, as if it were impossible to overcome. The healing word of God contains advice and comfort for all cases. The Lord, being thy Helper in all adversities, and able to turn the sharpest afflictions into the greatest blessings, would never smite if he were not willing to heal, nor withhold from thee one privilege, if he had not a better to substitute. O Lord, I trust thou wilt carry me through all difficulties. Though my misery and weakness were ever so great, yet there is nothing too great for thee; it is all one to thee, to help in great and small distresses; nay, the more I am surrounded with grief and weakness, the more wilt thou pity, spare, and nourish me, as a tender mother does the least of all her children; and the more occasion there will be to display thy mighty salvation. The sharper and longer my distress and conflicts have been, the nearer, greater, and sweeter, I trust; will also be my victory and salvation; for the same Lord who has assured me that I shall not be tried above measure, has also engaged to lead me on, conquering, till at length all mine enemies are subdued. My soul, wait thou only upon God; from him cometh my salvation.

There's full redemption at his throne
 For sinners long enslaved;
 The great Redeemer is his Son,
 And Israel shall be saved.

There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel; thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you. Josh. vii. 13. See also 2 Pet. i. 4, Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

KNOWN sin, in all its various forms, is an accursed thing, by which we are deprived of the protection of God, and cannot stand before our enemies. Behold, therefore, the severity of God (Josh. vii. 21–26), and be more earnest. Make all haste to flee from the lust of the world, especially from the lust of the eye, which is the love of money. Break off even the most subtle and specious bands of unrighteousness. Unless the splinters of the unjust Mammon be taken out, the wound cannot be healed up. Nay, examine thyself closely, in other things; and whatever sinful lust is found in thy breast, put it off, and flee from it, else thou must not wonder at thy being so weak in spirit. He that does not resist the sinful motions of his heart, will very easily give a loose to his hands and tongue. But he that immediately subdues the inward corruptions, will certainly be preserved from their breaking out in sinful actions. O Lord, deliver me from all accursed things, and keep my heart always under thy closest inspection and discipline. Fill me with thyself, then shall I be above coveting the poor things of earth.

Why should my passions mix with earth,
And thus debase my heavenly birth?
Why should I cleave to things below,
And let my God, my Saviour go?

I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. Job. xlii. 6.

MY dear reader, reflect a moment who it was that made this confession, and consider the many excellencies that he had (see chap. xxxi.) Doubtless you will be ready to ask, Why this self-abhorrence? What did this man mean? Let me give the answer. Before he obtained that discovery of God which produced the expressions just cited, he had a far less perfect knowledge of himself, and therefore was not sufficiently abased in his own esteem. We all need to grow in humility; and nothing tends to promote humility more than a clear view of the Divine perfections. Elihu charges Job home with an undue opinion of his own righteousness; but it was not till God spake, that Job exclaimed, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." The whole narrative should serve to convince us, that man cannot, of himself, "be just with God!" In this view, it is preparatory to the gospel, and a striking comment upon those words of St. Paul, and the Psalmist, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God:" "In thy sight shall no man living be justified." "God be merciful to me a sinner," is a prayer easy to be said, but hard to be felt. It can be felt by those only who view themselves in the light that shines from thy holy law, and are influenced by the grace that flows through thy holy gospel.

Almighty God, thy powerful grace
Can change us, and forgive;
Can save a guilty rebel race,
And say, Repent and live.

And they sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. Rev. v. 9.

IN heaven the saints have a full sense of their great deliverance, together with a perfect knowledge of sin, far beyond anything we now conceive of it; and the glory of redeeming grace will be the eternal ground of their love and adoration. On earth, it is the great exercise and difficult work of faith, to see sin and Christ at the same time, or be penetrated with a lively sense of our desert, and absolute freedom from condemnation. But the more we know of both, the nearer approach we shall make to heaven; and we are our own greatest enemies, if, together with the fullest comprehension of sin, and the deepest humiliation for it, we do not look steadfastly unto Jesus, and see it taken away by the Lamb of God. This, though continually repeated by the heavenly choir, is called their *new* song; because it is always matter of as great joy to them as if they had never sung it before; and because the love of God and of Christ in their redemption, is always opening upon them with new and increasing wonders. O my soul, let nothing hinder thee from beginning it now! Sing, sing to Jesus with heart and voice, and so do honour to his blood!

Worthy for ever is the Lord,
That died for treason not his own,
By every tongue to be adored:
And dwell upon his Father's throne!

Follow me. Luke v. 27. And endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 2 Tim. ii. 3.

WOULDST thou follow Christ? Exemplify self-denial, humility, patience, and a readiness for every good work. Follow him, bearing a daily cross; and look to his cross, to make thy burden light. Follow him as thy Guide and Guard, and learn to see with his eyes, and to trust in his arm for defence. Follow him as the Friend of sinners, who heals the broken in heart, and gives rest to weary souls, and casts out none that come unto him. Follow him with faith, resting thy whole acceptance with God, and thy title to heaven, on his meritorious blood and righteousness. Lastly, follow him with much prayer. For, though he is full of compassion, he loves to be much entreated; and, when he is determined to give a blessing, thou must yet wrestle with him for it. Thus follow Jesus, and he will lead thee to glory. When arrived there, thou wilt be far from regretting the toil which was sustained, or the sacrifices which were made, in thy progress towards that region of inconceivable and eternal joy. There he will lead thee to living fountains, and fill thee with his own joy.

"What happy men or angels these,
That all their robes are spotless white?
Whence did this glorious troop arrive
At the pure realms of heavenly light?"

From torturing racks and burning fires,
And seas of their own blood, they came:
But nobler blood has washed their robes,
Flowing from Christ the dying Lamb.

The Lord is not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being. Acts xvii. 27, 28. Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Luke xii. 7.

HOW close and tender the love which the Lord bears to his people! Nothing is so mean as to be overlooked by the providence of God; and scarcely anything is so minute as not to be capable of either injuring or profiting the soul. How sweet is it to observe the Divine footsteps, even in the least considerable affairs, and to be satisfied that we may trust every concern in the Divine hands! O Lord, grant that I may never swerve from thee, nor do anything without thee; but that, in going in and out, I may always have respect to thy presence, as if I had to do with none but thee. O that I could transact all my affairs as if with thee alone, and in all places look upon thee as my Observer and Friend? Let me carefully mark the inward workings of thy grace, and the outward tokens of thy providence, so as daily to have a true sense of thy gracious presence in everything, whether more or less important; and thereby to be strengthened in faith, and kept in a composed state of mind; considering that nothing happens by mere chance, but that all is wisely ordered by thy providential care for our good; firmly believing, if anything goes contrary to expectation that some benefit will accrue from it, if I be but patient and resigned. Lord, give me resignation, and produce in me entire acquiescence in thy wise, holy, and gracious will.

Cleave to that which is good. Rom. xii. 9. Seek those things which are above. Col. iii. 1.

THE tendencies of those subjects which we habitually contemplate, and the manners of those persons with whom we are familiar, display themselves in our prevailing sentiments and behaviour. If we converse much with God and heavenly things, we shall be heavenly-minded; but, if we deal much with the world and temporal things, we must be sensual and worldly-minded. Up, therefore, with thy heart to God; lift it hourly up to Him; though it sinks down often to the earth again, yet the Lord has patience, and will as often receive it again. Therefore, raise it up continually, and take great care to keep it above; that it may not sink down, and be defiled with worldly things again. Thus it will be easy to abide in a spiritual frame; but without this care we cannot abide in it at all; a feather easily rises higher and higher, when kept above ground; but moves slowly upward, when once fallen into the mire. Choose now, which you please. O that I may always choose the best, namely, to cleave unto the Lord, seeking the things which are above.

Descend from heaven, immortal Dove,
Stoop down, and take me on thy wings;
And mount and bear me far above
The reach of these inferior things—

Beyond, beyond this lower sky,
Up where eternal ages roll,
Where solid pleasures never die,
And fruits immortal feast the soul.

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace. Luke ii. 29.
Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong. Isaiah
xxxv. 4.

IT is only wilful unbelief that seals the condemnation of the soul; no such melancholy result attaches to the weak faith of a fearful and tempted Christian. If I do not reject the ransom of Christ my Surety, but feel my utter need of it, and am heartily desirous to accept it by faith, God will no more reject me than he will reject my Surety, or his own eternal decree. Yet, since I have very weak faith, and am often ready to sink into despair, how can I depart this life in peace? With God this is possible; for he can impart the peace that passeth all understanding. It is not by any power of our own, but solely by thy Divine power, that we shall be kept through faith unto salvation. With God, it is equally easy to carry the weakest or the strongest through the scenes of life, and the gates of death, into the eternal world. Since, then, God is the same wise, gracious, and mighty God in all circumstances, he will lend me his aid in every extremity, and bring me safe to the heavenly shore.

Death cannot make our souls afraid,
If God be with us there;
We may walk through its darkest shade,
And never yield to fear.

I could renounce my all below,
If my Creator bid;
And run, if I were called to go,
And die as Moses did.

O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches. Psalm civ. 24. Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord. Psalm cvii. 43.

O LORD, how many are thine unknown mercies! I am surrounded with them on all sides; yet how little do I observe them, and acknowledge them to thy praise! If thou hast punished even the heathen, for not having glorified thee in thy works, what will become of me? Pardon, O Lord, this my blindness and ingratitude; and to all thine other kindness add a thankful heart, that I may joyfully praise thee for the blessing of my creation, the daily bounty of thy providence, and the adorable gift of thy Son. In all thy creatures may I see and adore thine infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; and be thereby continually strengthened in faith, and stirred up to thy praise and love. Thus let me always converse with thee, cleave to thee, and have uninterrupted communion with thee; that nothing may in the least disturb this disposition of my soul. O Lord, grant me this privilege, and ever keep me near to thy most blessed self, for thy glory's sake. Amen.

The glories of my Maker, God,
My joyful voice shall sing,
And call the nations to adore
Their Former, and their King.

We bring our mortal powers to God,
And worship with our tongues;
We claim some kindred with the skies,
And join the angelic songs.

The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon. Judges vii. 20. They are bread for us; their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us; fear them not. Numb. xiv. 9. But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and has followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereunto he went. Verse 24.

TAKE care, O my soul, that there may also be *another spirit* with thee, as there was with Joshua and Caleb—not to be discouraged on account of thy weakness and the great number of thine enemies, as if it were impossible to live holily and get the victory. Christ, a Leader infinitely superior to Joshua or Caleb, marches out before thee, to make war himself against thine enemies; and who can conquer him? He is unchangeable; His Spirit is as mighty now as ever, and his word as powerful. His strength shall be made perfect in thy weakness; and with the sharp two-edged sword which he will teach thee to wield, thou shalt destroy or put to flight all thine adversaries. Afflictions and temptations may harass thee from day to day; but thy triumph shall soon be complete. Thou shalt quit this sinful and perplexing world. Then shalt thou receive a crown from the Captain of salvation; and all that, like thee, have conquered through his aid, shall unite their voices with thine, eternally in his praise. “Not unto us, Lord, not unto us, but to thy name be glory, for thy mercy and thy truth’s sake.”

Exalted near their Saviour’s seat,
His saints shall dwell, their dangers o’er;
And cast their crowns beneath his feet,
And love, and wonder and adore.

Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness; I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off; and my salvation shall not tarry. We are all as an unclean thing; and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. Isa. xlv. 12, 13; lxiv. 6.

TRUE religion is founded upon the knowledge of the true God. Sinners are apt to think that they have a high opinion of God, because they think highly of his mercy; whereas God is as holy and as just as he is merciful; and he will as certainly punish the guilty as he will pardon the penitent and believing soul. "God, I thank thee, I am not as other men are," says every self-righteous sinner; not considering that, if God were extreme to mark what is amiss, no flesh living could be justified. "God be merciful to me a sinner," says every true Christian and real believer. Till this be thy language, O my soul; till thou feel thyself a lost and helpless sinner; till thou be brought to acknowledge the justice of God in thy condemnation; till thou be driven to Christ, as thine only refuge and hope of salvation, thou art "ignorant of God's righteousness, art going about to establish thine own righteousness, and dost not submit to the righteousness of Christ."

Sinners shall hear the sound;
 Their thankful tongues shall own,
 "Our righteousness and strength are found
 In thee the Lord alone."

In thee shall Israel trust,
 And see their guilt forgiven;
 God will pronounce the sinners just,
 And take the saints to heaven.

Thou, therefore, endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.
2 Tim. ii. 3.

PRINCES combat with flesh and blood ; Christians wrestle with principalities and powers : princes engage in conflicts which are often suspended by a truce ; Christians are not allowed a moment's respite : the former may make conditions of peace ; the latter must refuse all overtures : princes may be vanquished, yet escape with their lives ; professed Christians can yield only at the expense of their salvation. Therefore watch as for thy life ; fight as for thy soul : the enemies whom thou seest to-day, thou shalt see no more, when, having put them all to flight, thou shalt lay down thy sword, and take up thy crown, and sing, "Victory, victory," for ever, through the blood of the Lamb. Let, then, the prospect of heavenly glory fire thee ; though thine enemies be powerful, go forth against them in the strength of the Captain of thy salvation.

"Fight on, my faithful band," he cries,
"Nor fear the mortal blow ;
Who first in such a warfare dies,
Shall speediest victory know.

"I have my days of combat known,
And in the dust was laid ;
But thence I mounted to my throne,
And glory crowns my head.

"That throne, that glory, you shall share ;
My hands the crown shall give ;
And you the sparkling honours wear,
While God himself shall live."

I will heal your backslidings. Jer. iii. 22. It is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Phil. ii. 13.

BLESSED Lord and Saviour, I would fain believe in thee, be faithful, obedient, and work always that which is good. And, since this also is thy will, I trust it shall be done; for, if thou wilt and I will, who can hinder it? True it is, that sin, flesh, the world, and devils, are against it; but shall these enemies be stronger than thou, the mighty God? Shall their opposition be able to quell thy work in me, if I do not consent to it? That can never be. The more violence they use upon me, the more earnest may I be with thee in prayer; and the more I pray, the more glorious will thine assistance be; the more they hinder, the more thou wilt further; so that all their hinderances shall be swallowed up by thy furtherances, as the serpents of the sorcerers in Egypt were swallowed up by the serpent of Moses. The enemy will fall by his own sword, and the greatest opposition will turn to my good, and to the promoting of thy work. Everything indeed can overcome me, if I do not abide in thee, by continual faith and prayer; but, by thus abiding in thee, all opposition proves not only weak in itself, but profitable to my soul. O Jesus, let thy strength be made perfect in my weakness, and may I ever find thy grace sufficient for me!

We honour our exalted King;
 How sweet are his commands!
 He guards our souls from hell and sin,
 By his almighty hands.

I am like a green fir-tree; from me is thy fruit found. Hosea xiv. 8. *I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground.* Mal. iii. 11. See also Isaiah xxvii. 2, 6.

IS it not a disagreeable thing for a gardener to see the finest blossoms and fruits destroyed by the caterpillars? Does it not rejoice him to see all the branches bow with ripe fruit? O thou heavenly Husbandman, grant that I may not displease thee! Let me abide in Christ, my true Vine, and always bring forth good fruits. But since every fruit has its enemies, and thou hast no sooner produced what is good, than the insects of sin endeavour to destroy it, I beseech thee to make me watchful and diligent. Rebuke the devourer, and preserve me as a branch of Christ, night and day, as thou hast promised; that my fruits may endure to eternity. The fruitfulness of the gardens and vineyards which thy right hand has planted, glorifies thy name. O that I may contribute largely to that noblest end of all human, all angelic actions! Let the crystal stream which proceeds from thy throne fertilize the soil in which thou permittest me to grow. Spirit of God, make me very fruitful!

Like trees of myrrh and spice we stand,
Planted by God the Father's hand;
And all his springs in Zion flow,
To make the young plantation grow.

Let my Beloved come, and taste
His pleasant fruits at his own feast;
"I come, my spouse, I come," he cries,
With love and pleasure in his eyes.

He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him. Psalm cxlv. 19.

THE Lord is both able and willing to do “exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,” granting not only according to the notion of our narrow hearts, but according to the riches of his glory, as becomes his Majesty. Christ delights in great petitions; for he is a great Lord, and is rich unto all that call upon him. He has all the riches of his merits and gifts, not for himself (since, being the very God, he wanted nothing for himself) but only for us, even the rebellious, who sincerely call upon him. Therefore, what he has, as Mediator, all belongs to me, if I am but a humble and earnest petitioner. O my soul, pray to him, nay, be much in prayer; and, as often as thou pourest out thy soul before him in prayer, let these words recur, and fill thee with joyful expectation—“He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him.” Not a petition, not a groan, shall be lost. How many blessings, in addition to those which we have, should we all receive, if we were but more frequent and earnest in our applications! Why are we so reluctant to glorify God, and to seek higher measures of felicity?

He knows the pains his servants feel,
He hears his children cry;
And their best wishes to fulfil,
His grace is ever nigh.

His mercy never shall remove
From men of heart sincere;
He saves the souls whose humble love
Is joined with holy fear.

Joshua drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. Joshua viii. 26. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. 1 John iii. 8.

A WILLING subjection to any one sin is not consistent with the grace of God and true saving faith. (Romans vi. 14.) For, though wicked inhabitants will abide in the heart, and sometimes prevail over a believer, they must not reign there, but should be vigorously resisted; since we may be utterly ruined by willing subjection to a single sin. Though thou art actually converted, and hast gained the dominion over thy sins, yet thou must not draw back thy hand, and lay the spear and sword of the Spirit aside. There is no truce in this war, nor any rest found but in fighting: for, if thou dost not vanquish thine enemies, they will vanquish thee. Therefore the Christian soldier's watch-word is, *Fight on*, looking to Jesus. Satan left Christ only for a time; much more will he renew his assaults upon us again and again; nay, if a man is not watchful, but presumptuous, "he takes to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself." But, if the conflict last long with thee, remember, that it is also the case with others; fight on, therefore, and faint not; at last the victory will be the more sweet and glorious. Only, above all things, take the shield of faith; for faith, by which we are in covenant with Christ, alone triumphs. Faith honours Christ by pleading with him, and Christ honours faith by giving to it.

Come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price. Isaiah
lv. 1. Come, for all things are now ready. Luke xiv. 17. Him
that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. John vi. 37.

WOULD the heart of a tender parent permit him to reject the application of a child imploring that relief which he must have or die? No more will God turn a deaf ear to the cry of a trembling sinner. Let us, therefore, press through a thousand discouragements, and venture, just as we are, to make known unto him our requests. "Him that cometh," he has said, "I will in no wise cast out." He is pleased with our solicitude and importunity; and, ere long, will send an answer of peace. A feeling of joy is not needful to bring us to Christ, but a feeling of our wants. Jesus always says, "COME." Whatever may be your wants, whatever your miseries, or whatever your sins, Jesus says, "Come unto me." He has what you want. He has all you want. He has the heart also to give it you, and to give it freely. Not only so, but he really wishes you to have what you need. He considers himself to be glorified by giving, and that you glorify him by receiving. Will you not glorify Jesus by looking into yourself to see what you need, and then going to him to be supplied? All things are ready, Jesus is willing and waiting, arise and go to him, for he is calling you. Ask and receive, that your joy may be full.

Come, happy souls, approach your God
 With new melodious songs;
 Come, tender to Almighty grace
 The tribute of your tongues.

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. Rom. xli. 21.
Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? 1 Peter iii. 13.

THE life of a Christian is a warfare; and the conflict between sin and holiness, and between sorrow and comfort, is often very violent. Sin, Satan, self, and the world, are his daily enemies. He is also exposed to poverty, affliction, reproaches, and persecution. O my Saviour, help me to overcome every evil in the strength of thy grace; give me a heart to do good to all who may seek to hurt me. "Who," my Christian associates, "is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" Not the Father—for he loves you. Not Jesus—he died for you. Not the Spirit—his work is to comfort you. Not good men—they love those that follow that which is good. Not wicked men, nor devils—for, though enemies, they are confined, and cannot stir one step beyond what your God and Saviour permits them. When you meet with a trial, look not to men, but to Jesus. Pray for patience to bear it, and look up for a blessing upon it. Then all things shall work together for good. (Rom. viii. 28.) Let every temptation make you more careful, and put you on closer watching against the enemy. Cleave to Jesus by faith and prayer, like a child to its parent, when it sees an enemy coming towards it. Behold him, flee to him, rest upon him, and then you will rejoice in him. My soul, I charge thee to flee to Christ *from* all danger, and *for* every needed blessing.

Prayer shall be made for him continually, and daily shall he be praised. Psalm lxxii. 15.

O WHAT a condescending King we have, who may always be approached! You say, O that my coldness and indifference would permit me to do it! But are you not sensible of your wants and miseries? Is not this backwardness of which you complain, misery enough? Therefore you ought always to pray, and to pray most when you feel yourselves sinking into a worldly and torpid frame. Arise, therefore, and pray; the good Spirit of God will assist you in it. Encouraged by the promise of a prayer-hearing God, and the special assistance of the Holy Spirit in this work, we must, even in the greatest conflicts, not omit to resist the temptations of the devil. Though we have sinned, we must not refrain from prayer; for what can we do better? What can we do besides? If we stop till we make ourselves worthy, we shall never approach God. Lord, grant me more of the spirit of prayer, and let it never be extinguished in my heart; but may it become as natural to pray, as to breathe. May I pray without ceasing, lifting up holy hands, without wrath or doubting.

Arise, my soul, my joyful powers,
And triumph in thy God;
Awake, my voice, and loud proclaim
His glorious grace abroad.

Arise, my soul, from deep distress,
And banish every fear;
God calls thee to his throne of grace,
To spread thy sorrows there.

What doest thou here, Elijah. 1 Kings xix. 13.

LET this question be supposed as addressed to us :
“What doest thou here,” in this world, into which thou art sent? Art thou working “the work of him” that sent thee, or standing all the day idle? How dost thou acquit thyself in the duties of thy particular calling? Art thou upright, conscientious, and useful therein? Art thou in the post assigned thee, truly called and properly qualified for it? Or hast thou thrust thyself into it, without warrant or invitation, and therefore hast no cause to expect success? What doest thou here, in this retirement? Is the world shut out of thy thoughts, and are the visits of the blessed Spirit invited? What doest thou here, if it be not thy wish and endeavour to have communion with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ? What doest thou here, if thou art not at peace with God? If thou desirest peace and safety, plead the blood of Jesus, flee to the city of refuge, before the avenger of blood overtake thee, and thou perish. “Remember Lot’s wife,” and look not behind thee, lest thou become a monument of wrath. What doest thou here in times of trial? Art thou flying from the danger, or boldly facing it in the name and strength of the Lord? Art thou ashamed of the cross, or dost thou willingly take it upon thee! Art thou for pitching thy tent here, satisfied with thy present portion? or art thou looking to a better country, to a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God?” O to say honestly and heartily, “I am here, Lord, to glorify thee!”

Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net. Psalm xxv. 15. Happy is the man that feareth always. Prov. xxviii. 14.

OUR spiritual enemies are powerful and crafty: they lie in wait everywhere, so that in all places, and at all times, we are surrounded with many cruel murderers. Blessed is he that keeps clear from self-confidence; and, fearing always, says within himself, as soon as he awakes in the morning, "Who knows what temptations I may meet with to-day? Perhaps, when I arise, at the very first step, my feet may be entangled in dangerous snares and nets." Grant, O Lord, I beseech thee, that, distrusting myself, I may put my whole confidence in thee, watching evermore in all things, and looking cautiously in all places about me, where there is any fear of danger. Whatever I am about to do or to speak, let me first commune with thee by prayer; that keeping always close to thee, I may be preserved against the power and craft of mine enemies, as in a stronghold; and confidently say, according to thy own pattern given (Psalm xvi. 8), "I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand I shall not be moved."

God is my Portion and my joy;
His counsels are my light!
He gives me sweet advice by day,
And guards me through the night.

My soul would all her thoughts approve
To his all-seeing eye;
Nor death nor hell my hopes shall move,
While such a friend is nigh.

My father worketh hitherto, and I work. John v. 17.

O MY soul, rely on the Divine power, which is ever active, and cannot fail to destroy thy sins, and fulfil the good pleasure of God in thee. He is our All; we are nothing and can do nothing. Happy are we, that we can have Him for our support in all things; and that the children of God are not required to direct their own steps, but shall be led by their heavenly Father. Now, O Lord, since, by the will and workings of my own heart, I throw only so many hinderances and blocks in my way, grant I beseech thee, that in true dependence on thee, I may venture everything; and, despairing of my own sufficiency, may always abide in thee, draw all necessary strength from thee by prayer, and bring forth many good fruits, which may last to eternity. Thy work in true believers, weak as it may seem now, will last for ever, and none shall be able to destroy it. Work in me mightily, both to will and to do of thine own good pleasure; and as the effect of thy working in me, may I work for thy glory, the spread of thy truth, and the conversion of souls to Jesus. Lord, I would live to honour thee, and be a blessing to all around me: O take me and make me meet for thy use, and then employ me in thy cause.

God, my Supporter and my Hope,
My help for ever near,
Thine arm of mercy held me up,
When sinking in despair.

Thy counsels, Lord, shall guide my feet
Through this dark wilderness;
Thy hand conduct me near thy seat,
To dwell before thy face.

Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. James iv. 7, 8. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. James v. 16.

O MY soul, draw nigh to God in prayer, and he will draw nigh to thee; be instant in it, and the devil cannot stand against thee; for prayer will drive away sin and Satan, as the wind drives the smoke before it; it works wonderfully great things, and will make easy what seems impossible. If God has given thee some spiritual blessings already, this is an encouragement to hope also for that which thou lackest yet; therefore only pray confidently, and thou shalt receive evermore. Ask in faith, nothing doubting, for he is faithful that has promised, and not one of his promises shall fail. Nothing but unbelief can exclude us from the enjoyment of *many* blessings in this world, and *all* blessings in the world to come. Expect Satan to oppose thee, for he will, and especially when upon thy knees. He hates prayer, and therefore he frequents our closets to harass, perplex, and fill us with confusion. When he has stirred up our corruptions, bewildered our imaginations, and distracted our understandings, he will suggest that it is no use to pray in such a state of mind. Resist him, and he will flee; plead with God against him more fervently. Never yield, but pray on; if thou canst not as thou wilt, pray as thou canst.

My God, I bow before thy feet;
When shall my soul get near thy seat?
When shall I see thy glorious face,
And all thy majesty and grace?

I live by the faith of the Son of God. Gal. ii. 20.

IN spiritual things we are too often living upon self. We seek in frames, forms, creatures, and animal life, that peace and that stability which are to be found in the Redeemer only. Outward duties are well in their place; but they have no divine life in themselves, and therefore can give none. They are to be performed, but not trusted in; to be used with grace, but not as the price with which grace may be purchased. They are as the scaffold of the building, a means for carrying on the work, but not the end of the great design. In the power of Christ, they are blessings; without it, they have no power. The whole trust must be in him. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; without him, prayers, praises, rites and ordinances, are carcasses without a soul. All our performances, in order to be holy and acceptable, must be animated by his Spirit. Then it is that we enjoy a communion of heart and interests with the adorable Jesus, and a delightful view, behind the veil of outward ordinances (such as no carnal eye can behold), manifesting the Lord in his goodness, beauty, grandeur, blessedness, and glory. What will it be, to enjoy this vision and communion without a veil between; and to enjoy it for ever! Lord Jesus, prepare me for it, and then introduce me to it.

Nature has all its glories lost,
When brought before thy throne;
No flesh shall in thy presence boast,
But in the Lord alone.

Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. Exod. ii. 9.

AS Moses was ordered to be saved by the daughter of his most cruel enemy, so Satan himself, even when he meditates our destruction, must be a means of our life. Blessed Saviour, thou wilt not leave me in the hands of any that can hurt me! If thou art mine, all is mine, even thy Father, thy Spirit, and thy heavenly glory; all accidents, all enemies, must work for my good, and be instruments and ministers of my salvation. May I, trusting in thee, never yield to fear, but find that everything which occurs to me is made a blessing, that winds and waves are but accelerating my progress towards the shore of a happy eternity. May I be enabled to say, "to me to live is Christ, and to die is great gain—is ever to be present with the Lord." Teach me to live by faith on Jesus, to walk in close and intimate fellowship with thyself, and to employ every talent for thy glory and praise. I want to be taught of God. To be taught to believe, love, and work for thee. "O lead me in thy truth and teach me, for thou art the God of my salvation."

My soul, survey thy happiness,
If thou art found a child of grace;
How richly is the gospel stored! —
What joy the promises afford!

All things are now the gift of God,
And purchased with our Saviour's blood;
While the good Spirit shows us how
To use and to enjoy them too.

If peace and plenty crown my days,
They help me, Lord, to speak thy praise,
If bread of sorrows be my food,
Those sorrows work my real good.

Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns. Eph. v. 19. *Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns.* Col. iii. 16.

IF we are obliged to promote the temporal good of our neighbour, how much more the spiritual by edifying discourses! But how often have we occasion to remark, that the children of God seem at a loss for conversation, or slide into unprofitable subjects! It would be well for them, if, at such seasons, they were thus to appeal on high: "O my God, here I receive a guest, and, having nothing to set before him, I pray thee to give what will prove wholesome food both for him and myself." They would often be indulged with a gracious answer; and thus at once receive and convey spiritual improvement. Some, affecting to be philosophers, mock at divine things, and even at prayer, as if we needed no other help than our own depraved reason and will. But what Saint Paul says (Rom. i. 22), is fulfilled in them: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." What will become of these poor scoffers upon their dying bed, and at the day of judgment? O that they would take warning while it is time, and now, even now, ere the day of mercy is for ever past, turn to the only refuge of the guilty! Lord, send thy Spirit, to convince, convert, and thoroughly turn them to thyself?

Lord, I will bless thee all my days,
Thy praise shall dwell upon my tong
My soul shall glory in thy grace,
While saints rejoice to hear the song.

Tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him. Mark xvi. 7. If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the Propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. 1 John ii. 1, 2. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees. Heb. xii. 12.

HAST thou been slack, unfaithful, and fallen away? Thou art not to make light of it: lamentations become thee; and thou oughtest to humble thyself deeply before God. But why wilt thou continue in thy fallen condition any longer? From the depths of thy humiliation and sorrow, call upon the Redeemer; he is ready to forgive thee, as he forgave Peter; "having received gifts for the rebellious." Delay not to lay hold of thy ransom, which is greater than all the sins in the world. Be not discouraged, nor listen to those suggestions which would urge thee either to cherish despondency, or to seek relief in the pleasures of the world. The Lord even now reaches forth his hands to thee anew by this very word; come, lift thyself up at it, and be careful for the time to come, to be so much more cautious and humble, and especially to treat others with greater tenderness and affection. Gracious Saviour, speak to the heart of every fallen Peter, and bring him back! O send one of thy loving messages to every backsliding child, and thus restore him to thyself!

We give thee, Lord, our highest praise,
 The tribute of our tongues:
 But themes so infinite as these
 Exceed our noblest songs.

Behold, we come unto thee. Jer. iii. 22. I will come unto you. John xiv. 18. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house. Luke xix. 5.

O MY Saviour, since I come to thee, and thou comest to me, who shall prevent, or disturb, or break up our interview? Surely I have heard thee say, "In me thou findest, not an angry Judge, but a kind Mediator. I make effectual intercession on thy behalf. The Divine wrath shall not descend on thy trembling soul." I will therefore rejoice, and be confident. For he who speaks these comfortable words, is the Son of God, in whom dwells all the fulness of grace, and for whose sake the Father will blot out every sin, and impart all spiritual blessings. In the hour of conflict and danger, Divine aid flies, as on the wings of the wind, and, when its movements are slowest, it will yet arrive in due season. Meanwhile, I am taught to improve in the exercise of patience and faith, and learn not only to be more diligent, but also to wait patiently for my God. O Saviour, visit me this day, unveil thy glories to me, and put a double portion of thy grace within me!

The King himself comes near,
And feasts his saints to-day:
Here we may sit, and see him here,
And love, and praise, and pray.

One day amidst the place
Where my dear Lord hath been,
Is sweeter than ten thousand days
Of pleasurable sin.

Mine iniquities are gone over my head; as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me. Psalm xxxviii. 4.

IT is a sure sign that a man is awakened out of his sleep, when he discovers the error of his dream. In the drawing up of water out of a deep well, so long as the bucket is under water, we feel not the weight of it; but as soon as it comes above water, it begins to hang heavy on the hand: and, if a man dive under water, he feels not its weight, though there may be many tons of it over his head; whereas a small vessel, full of the same water, would be very burdensome to him, and make him soon grow weary of it. In like manner, so long as a man is overhead in sin, he is not sensible of the weight of sin, it is not troublesome to him; but, when he begins to come out of that state of sin wherein he lay and lived before, then sin begins to hang heavy upon him, and he groans under the weight thereof. So long as sin is in the will, the proper seat of sin, a man feels not the weight of it, but it is sport and pastime to him to do evil. It is therefore a good sign that sin is removed out of its chair of state, when it becomes burdensome to us; and such a sense of sin may well be considered as an entrance into a state of grace.

Great God! create my heart anew,
And form my spirit pure and true:
O make me wise betimes to spy
My danger and my remedy.

Behold I fall before thy face:
My only refuge is thy grace;
No outward forms can make me clean:
The leprosy lies deep within.

Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.

Jer. iii. 22. When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. Luke xv. 20.

HEAR therefore the voice of thy loving Father and Shepherd, O thou backsliding child and lost sheep, crying earnestly, Return! return! Do not run on in the broad way with the world any longer. Art thou not tired yet of the husks of the world? Dost thou feel no troubles in thy soul? Shall not these drive thee to God? Lo! thy Father and Shepherd seeks thee. He is gone forth to call and meet thee already. He will receive thee willingly and joyfully. Approach him, praying as the prodigal son, and he will freely forgive thee, though thou hast sinned beyond what it is in thy power to describe. He is also able to heal the most desperate corruptions of thy heart. He can deliver thee from the very jaws of hell. Begin, then, to call upon him earnestly in prayer; and, poor and wretched as thou art, come to him as the Physician of thy soul; for, the Physician and the sick, a rich Saviour and a poor sinner, are the best suited to one another. Come just as thou art to Jesus again.

From deep distress and troubled thoughts,
To thee, my God, I raised my cries;
If thou severely mark our faults,
No flesh can stand before thine eyes.

But thou hast built thy throne of grace,
Free to dispense thy pardons there,
That sinners may approach thy face,
And hope and love, as well as fear.

Watch ye, therefore, and pray always. Luke xxi. 36. Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us. Heb. xii. 1.

THE hearts of men are not like their clocks, which need, at most, to be wound up only once a-day. They are liable to become inactive, and to fall into disorder, every moment; and must therefore be searched and excited, without intermission. We should accompany all our actions with prayer, strictly examining the principles whence they flow, and anxious that those principles may be of the highest order. If we proceed according to this rule, accepting every monition from above, we shall both avoid many severe chastisements, and glorify our Father which is in heaven. A Christian has daily his proper burden, like a clock its weights, by which the flesh is kept under, so that the spirit may rise. Therefore, when any trouble occurs, he looks upon it as his weight for the day, to stir him up to the exercise of prayer, and meditation on the word of God. O Lord, grant that I may always bear thine easy yoke, and never be the cause of my own distress and dulness. Quicken me in thy way, and fill me with life and love.

Ye servants of the Lord,
Each in his office wait,
Observant of his heavenly word,
And watchful at his gate.

O happy servant he,
In such a posture found;
He shall his Lord with rapture see,
And be with honour crown'd.

Give an account of thy stewardship. Luke xvi. 2.

“O LORD, how have I wasted my time, goods, and faculties! Pardon me for thine infinite mercy's sake; blot out my debt by thy blood; and grant that, henceforth, keeping a daily good account, and acting more prudently, faithfully, and diligently, my reckoning may not be false at last. But preserve me also from all needless cares; and cause me cheerfully to prosecute the business which thou allottest me, and to anticipate merciful support in all difficulties and afflictions. Teach me, O Lord, and give me wisdom and grace to govern my house, and manage all my affairs rightly. Be thou the principal Governor and Father of my family; I would be nothing but thy servant; direct me only in all things, that I may not suffer or do any harm.” He that does not expostulate with God, but accuses himself as guilty in all things, even his best performances, and flies to Christ as his only refuge, will be justified of God through the righteousness of his dear Son. Being thus adopted of God, he is ready and willing to be governed and directed by him in all things as a child. O for grace always to do God's will, aiming at his glory!

That awful day will surely come,
The appointed hour makes haste,
When I must stand before my Judge,
And pass the solemn test.

Thou lovely chief of all my joys,
Thou Sov'reign of my heart!
How could I bear to hear thy voice
Pronounce the sound, Depart!

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith. 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

MANY might be induced to pray for faith, if they did not presume, that because they are not heathens, Mahometans, or Jews, they must therefore be believers. Such as have faith often doubt the fact; while such as are destitute boast as if they possessed an abundance. Faith is wrought in the souls of those only who are deeply humbled by a thorough conviction of the greatness and heinousness of their sins, confessing themselves, not only with their lips, but their hearts, to be the chief of sinners. Without this repentance we do not enter through the right gate, and our faith is only fancy. Faith is the greatest and most difficult thing even to a child of God; it receives Christ into the heart, and overcomes the devil, world, and all sins, which is not easily done. But, if the generality of people have true faith, nothing is easier than to believe. For what can be easier than to assent to the Bible as true, which is all that the multitude intend when they say that they believe? There would be no need for men to pray for faith, or to examine themselves whether they have it. The wicked, therefore, who live in sin, deceive themselves in thinking that they have faith. For faith giveth victory over the world. Those also who trust in their own works, deceive themselves; for the prayer of faith is, "God be merciful to me a sinner." "Lord, save or I perish." True faith always receives Christ as its Saviour, copies the life of Christ as its example, and aims at the honour of Christ as its end.

For thy name's sake lead me and guide me. Pull me out of the net. Psalm xxxi. 3, 4. When the ark set forward, Moses said, Rise up, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee. Numbers x. 35.

EVERY one is beset with his own particular enemies, who endeavour to obstruct, to deceive, and to destroy him. But as the way is cleared for an earthly king, when he travels for a comparatively low and limited purpose, much more shall valleys be exalted, and hills be made low, crooked places be made straight, and rough places plain, when He, whose throne is heaven, and whose footstool is the earth, comes forth for the salvation of his devoted people. Grant, O Lord, that all my goings and restings may have respect to thy will. Be pleased to go continually before me, and to make room; causing my spiritual enemies to flee before thee. Thou art able to confound their craft and power. Enlighten mine eyes, blessed Jesus, that I may see mine enemies distinctly; and strengthen my faith in thee, that I may not fear them. Be the Captain of my salvation; lead me on praying and believing, and do thou fight all my battles for me. So shall I come off conqueror through thy love, and will give to thee eternal praise. Reader, is this thy prayer? Is Jesus thy hope? Is God's word thy rule? Is sin the object of thy fear? Is holiness thy ardent, habitual desire?

Great God, preserve my conscience clean;
Wash me from guilt, subdue my sin;
Thy love shall guard me from surprise,
Though threatening dangers round me rise.

---And Moses said unto them, *This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat.* Exodus xvi. 15.

THIS manna was entirely different from the common manna, which is shaken from the leaves of trees, and used only in medicine; this dropped down from the clouds, and was truly a miraculous production, as is evident from the following circumstances; that it fell but six days in the week—that it fell in such a prodigious quantity, as sustained almost three millions of souls—that a double portion of it fell the day before the Sabbath—and that none fell on that day.

This manna is called “spiritual meat,” because it signifies spiritual blessings in heavenly things. Christ himself is the true manna, the bread of life, of which that was a figure. The word of God is manna too, by which our souls are nourished. The comforts of the Spirit are also “hidden manna.” These come down from heaven, as the manna did; and are the support and comfort of the divine life in the soul, while we are in the wilderness of this world. The manna they gathered in the wilderness was not to be hoarded up, but eaten; so they that have received Christ, must live upon him daily by faith, and not think of laying up a stock to-day to serve them to-morrow. They that did eat manna in the wilderness hungered again; whereas, they that feed on Christ by faith shall never hunger. “Lord, evermore give us this bread!” Reader, is Christ Jesus manna to thy soul? Art thou living upon him—upon him alone—upon him day by day? Thou hast no life without this.

What wilt thou, Queen Esther? And what is thy request? It shall be given thee to the half of the kingdom. Esther v. 3.

DOST thou want nothing, O my fellow-mortal? Hast thou nothing to ask? Yes, thou repliest, I need an infinite supply. Well, then, draw near to thy gracious King and Bridegroom without fear. Lo! he holds out his golden sceptre to thee, saying, "Only ask; not the half, but the whole of my kingdom shall be granted; nay, I will give myself unto thee." Disclose to him, therefore, thy whole heart, mentioning all thy wants and grievances. Whatever is poured out before him, is lodged in its proper place; he takes the burden from thee, and encourages thee to hope for seasonable and full relief. If thou hast already experienced his loving-kindness, thy faith will rest upon him so much the more firmly. Be it thine to persevere in fervent supplications. We may be tempted to suppose that his bounty and compassion fall short of our necessities and afflictions. But, in truth, he is far more in earnest as a Benefactor, than we are as petitioners; or, to speak more explicitly, it is he that *excites*, as well as promises to *fulfil*, all our desires. Ask of him, therefore, all thou needest, and ask in faith.

Are those the happy persons here,
Who dwell the nearest to their God?
Has God invited sinners near,
And Jesus bought them with his blood?

Go, then, my soul, address the Son,
To lead thee near the Father's face;
Gaze on his glories yet unknown,
And taste the blessings of his grace.

What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? Luke xviii. 41.

O LORD, dost thou ask *me* also this question? I answer, That I may see how gracious thou art; and that, knowing thy love, I may make the warmest and best return. This is the sum and substance of all my desire. Thou knowest that of myself I can contribute nothing towards its accomplishment; but, in requiring me to ask, thou assurest me that thou art willing to bestow. Therefore, faith and love being thy demand, I humbly ask them at thy hands. O grant them to me, that I may exercise them both for the manifestation of thy glory. Since nothing is pleasing to thee but what is thy own gift, I trust that thou wilt certainly hear and fulfil this my request. My salvation is not grounded on my own, but on thine and thy Father's love and counsel; save me, therefore, by free grace, through thy merits, and let me go on, covered all over with grace and pardon. This is treasure enough, by which my heart can be well satisfied. This is more, infinitely more, than I have merited; it is all that my heart can desire. My prayer this day is, "Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation."

No more with trembling heart I try
A multitude of things;
Still wishing to find out that point
From whence salvation springs.

My anchor's cast—cast on a rock,
Where I shall ever rest
From all the labour of my thoughts,
And workings of my breast.

In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength. Isa. xx. 15. In your patience possess ye your souls. Luke xxxi. 19.

CHRISTIANS must suffer patiently; and patience is their armour, while God is fighting for them. But, when we are unwilling to suffer, going about to make complaints everywhere, and to seek human comfort, or to rid ourselves by our own contrivances, we lose the comfort of the Lord's help; we are stirring up the wasp-nest of our unruly thoughts, and bring more trouble upon ourselves and others; nay, we are fighting against God, who thereby intends to cure our impatience, pride, and anger. The more peevish we are, the more desperate is our disease; and, consequently, we have so much more need of such sharp but wholesome trials of affliction to mortify these bad passions. Therefore we must not presume to murmur or complain, which will only make bad worse. He who through impatience will flee from one trouble, may run into ten others; and though it were possible to free ourselves from trouble, yet the help is not so glorious and blessed as if we had waited for the help of the Lord.

Afflicted saint! to Christ draw near,
Thy Saviour's gracious promise hear;
His faithful word declares to thee,
That as thy day, thy strength shall be.

Thy faith is weak, thy foes are strong,
And if the conflict should be long,
Thy Lord will make the tempter flee;
For as thy day, thy strength shall be.

Whoso loveth instruction, loveth knowledge; but he that hateth reproof is brutish. Prov. xii. 1.

WHAT evil can be affirmed of us, the root of which is not found in our hearts? While maintaining the holy conflict, God, who can make even the wrath of man to praise him, visits us with a sharp (and apparently undeserved) reproof from some unkind acquaintance. If we receive this as from above, turning it into an occasion of deeper self-examination, and resolving more vigorously than ever to abstain from all appearance of evil, we certainly gain a great victory and blessing. But if we grow impatient, and make many excuses, being determined to resent all slights and imputations, we aggravate the evil, and neglect the means by which both others and ourselves might be improved. O Lord, correct our weakness, and conform us entirely to thy will and nature. May we see thy hand in every event, either directly working or overruling; and amidst our sorest trials remember, that whatever man intends, thy design is to do us good. If Shimei curse us, may we not retaliate, but say, "It may be the Lord hath bidden him, and will requite me good for his cursing."

Be with me, Lord, where'er I go;
Teach me what thou wouldst have me do;
Suggest whate'er I think or say;
Direct me in the narrow way.

Prevent me, lest I harbour pride,
Lest I in mine own strength confide,
Show me my weakness, let me see
I have my power, my all, from thee.

Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law. Rom. iii. 28. Ye see, then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. James ii. 24.

BOTH these apostles wrote by inspiration. Paul answers this question both affirmatively and negatively; that "a man is justified before God by faith, without the deeds of the law;" and in the 20th verse positively affirms, that "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified." James asserts, that "by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." Paul speaks of the justification of penitent sinners before God; James of the justification of saints before men: Paul of the justification of sinners believing in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ for pardon and life; James of the works of righteousness after justification by faith in Christ: Paul speaks of faith touching its office in the article of justification before God; James of faith in its fruits and effects: Paul's faith is supposed to be fruitful in obedience, in consequence of an interest in the merits of Christ; James's faith is declared so to be by obedience actually performed. Wherever there is a true faith, it must fix on Jesus Christ alone for salvation. This faith unites to Christ; and where there is union there must be love; and where there is love there must be obedience; and where there is obedience there will be a reward of grace; and when the reward is acknowledged to be of grace, and not of merit, God will have all the glory in time and in eternity. Lord, give me a living, working faith, that I may be justified before God and men! -

For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth. Exod. xxxiii. 16.

READER, dost thou adopt the language of Moses, and request with him, that, in all thy removals, God's presence may go with thee? that thou be not permitted to stir without this distinguishing testimony that thou art in the path of duty? Art thou waiting upon the Lord, earnest to serve him in sincerity and truth, not being conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of thy mind, and desirous to be numbered with his peculiar people? Then thou mayest expect the Divine blessing, and that thy way will be prosperous. It was a distinguishing privilege of the Israelites, that they were to "dwell alone," and not to be reckoned among the nations; and it is the privilege and duty of the spiritual Israel, to be separate and distinct from the world; they are a separate people in the love of God; in their election in Christ; in the covenant of grace made with them in him; in effectual vocation; in their being seated with him at his right hand in the day of judgment; and in their being with him to all eternity. Nor are they reckoned among the nations, but they are called out of them, and generally treated as the refuse and off-scouring of all things; they do not reckon themselves to be of the world, but as pilgrims and strangers in it. O my God, separate me from the world, conform me to thyself, and may all acknowledge me as thine!

And thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. Matt. i. 21.

SIN is our deadliest foe ; it cast our first parents out of paradise ; it defaced God's image in man ; it brought pain, sickness, and death into the world, and a spiritual death into the soul ; it causes a distance from God, and a dislike to his holy ways ; it gave Satan power over mankind ; it once drowned the world, and will at length consume it ; it exposes body and soul to the just judgment of a holy God, and will sink every unpardoned offender into everlasting destruction. How is this deadly foe to be conquered ? How is this fretting leprosy of the soul to be cleansed ? Reader, be careful in this matter, and seek a remedy that will be efficacious. Duties, prayers, tears, sacrifices, morality, and partial reformations, avail nothing in this case ; all below Christ Jesus will prove physicians of no value. Jesus is the only Saviour ; God the Father sent him into the world to save sinners ; his name declares the same ; he is " called JESUS, for he shall save his people from their sins : " his blood is the only atonement for sin ; this, sprinkled upon the heart by the Spirit, and apprehended by faith, removes the guilt and curse of sin, and speaks pardon and peace ; his grace breaks the power of sin and turns our former love to it into utter hatred ; thus is holiness secured in the heart and life, as well as peace in the conscience. He will save from the very being of sin all that place their trust in him. O Jesus, save me, and give the evidence of salvation in my heart !

Pour out your heart before God. Psalm lxi. 8.

WHAT a different view does this lively text give of *praying*, when opposed to the usual expression of *saying our prayers*; saying what our books or our parents teach us, or what we have been long used to say in a formal and customary manner! To pour out our hearts is like emptying a vessel of all its contents, so that nothing remains; and what a pleasing, awful, important thing must this be! Whatever is in my heart, my guilt or fears, my sins or sorrows, my cares and crosses, my wants, dangers, weaknesses, temptations, darkness, and ignorance, my doubts and anxieties respecting both body and soul, myself and others, the church and the world; every thought that arises relating either to past, present, or future, I have leave to empty myself of, or to pour out my drops in a more copious stream, till not one burden remains; and this not by myself or before men (for what help can I get from either?), but before God, who is a prayer-hearing God, both able and willing to relieve, and who will not turn away from his creatures, when they pour out their hearts before him, but will fill them with his consolations, which are neither few nor small. He can send a Hannah away no longer sad; can say, "Son, or daughter, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee;" and send an instructor to an inquiring Cornelius, to inform him what he must do. No wonder then that real prayer is such a cordial, when it is made before him who is a Refuge for us. O for the Spirit of grace and supplication!

By the grace of God I am what I am. 1 Cor. xv. 10. Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God. As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. 1 Peter i. 23, and chap. ii. 2.

WHAT made the wonderful difference between Saul the Pharisee, and Paul the Christian? Grace. What made him trample upon his former legal righteousness, and desire to be found in the righteousness of Christ? Grace, enlightening grace. Wherein consists the difference between the mere moralist and the real Christian? There may be a moral conduct where there is no grace, no principle of saving, divine faith; there may be the fear of the Lord, taught by the precept of men, and not by the Spirit of God. A person may make a high profession, may attend the ordinances of religion and scrupulously refrain from everything that would sully his reputation before men, yet all this time he may continue a stranger to the power of godliness. The apostle Paul presents, in the former part of his life, a memorable specimen of the extent to which the moral character may be carried, even while the heart is at enmity with God.

Have I the principle of grace in my soul? Have I tasted that the Lord is gracious? Then shall I desire the sincere milk of the word; and thence draw comfort and nourishment for my soul. Redeeming love will be my delightful subject: it will sweeten everything in the service of my blessed Lord: it will fire me with zeal for his glory; and will keep me lying low at his feet.

We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. 2 Cor. v. 10

AND are there scoffers, who madly walk after their own lusts, and question the coming of the Lord? The hour hastens when infidelity shall doubt no more: "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." How will sinners fade away, and be afraid in their close places, when, visible to all, the Judge shall appear on his great white throne, and from his face the earth and the heavens flee away! Before him shall stand the whole race of men, small and great, and by the testimony of God and their own consciences, shall be fully proved, and openly declared, what they have been, and what they have done. Then sentence, most righteous, irrevocable, and big with eternity, shall be pronounced; on the wicked, everlasting punishment; on the righteous, life eternal! Think, oh think, what destruction is hanging over your heads, ye obstinate transgressors! For, "behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him; they also who pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." "Now, now, is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation;" now embrace him, as your offered, your all-sufficient Saviour; so shall you be for ever delivered from him as your angry Judge. If you neglect the call, how shall you abide the day of his coming in flaming fire, to take vengeance on all them that know not God, and obey not the gospel! O to be found in Christ at that day! O to be acquitted of all charges in consequence of union to him!

We, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Romans xii. 5.

O THE blessed communion of saints! One member has the benefit of all the other members' gifts, prayers, and ministrations. One prays for all, and all pray for one. What one has, the other enjoys also. It may be truly said to them, All is yours. There is no envy, no haughtiness, no strife, among real saints; for, why should I indulge envy towards another, on account of his possessing that which I also enjoy? Why should I despise that which accommodates and assists me? And why should I strive against him whose sufferings involve my own? Is there any strife between the members of our natural body? By no means: they all serve one another. If one be injured, the rest contribute what they can towards its relief; never desisting till it appear that their efforts are unavailing. O Lord, unite us all in hearty fellowship, and tender feelings for each other, and heal all divisions; suffer not the proud, selfish, and litigious spirit of the world to influence the members of thy body; but bless and grace them all with true humility; then we shall live in a solid union and uninterrupted harmony.

Great Spirit of immortal love,
Vouchsafe our frozen hearts to move;
With ardour strong these breasts inflame,
For all that own a Saviour's name.

Still let the heavenly fire endure,
Fervent and vigorous, true and pure;
Let every heart and every hand
Join in the dear fraternal band.

Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.
2 Cor. iii. 3.

THE image is beautiful and instructing. The epistle of Christ, written, not in a stony heart, but in a heart of flesh—a heart softened by grace. The heart is the seat of vital religion. (Jer. xxxi. 33.)

The word is not effectual without the operation of the Spirit of God. By the Spirit, Christians are cast into the gospel mould; thereby they become evangelical, spiritual, and heavenly; their resemblance to Christ is gradually increased; they have the witness in themselves; have the comfortable experience that they are Christ's, when they can trace his image on their hearts. They are declared to others to be epistles of Christ, by their good conversation and conduct in the world, showing forth the truth, reality, and power of religion in times of affliction, and often at a dying hour. "Holiness to the Lord" is impressed in clear and durable characters. They also resemble one another in mutual love, and in love to all that bear the image of their Master.

Am I the epistle of Christ? Do I read the epistles of Christ in my Bible, and find them written on my heart? Do I see the finger of God in this divine book, and feel his Spirit renewing my soul? Do I read the mind of God there, and heartily approve of his mind? What shall I tender to him for so great a privilege? O that all who see me may recognise the handwriting of Jesus in me!

ALLELUIA. Rev. xix. 1.

THOU didst begin the year, O my soul, with a Hosannah, imploring the Lord's blessing; canst thou now conclude it with an Alleluia? Take a review of the year past. Hast thou not had many mercies? Have not the eyes of the Lord been upon thee for good from the beginning of the year to the end thereof? Has he not conducted thee through many seen, and many more unseen dangers? Canst thou not, with truth, as well as gratitude, set up thine Ebenezer, saying, "Hitherto the Lord hath helped me"? If thou hast not been so fruitful in good works as might have been expected, is thy Lord to blame, or thyself? Whatever good has been done in thee, or by thee, surely belongs to the favour of God; and whatever has caused shame or humiliation, is nowhere chargeable but upon thyself. "Praise the Lord, then, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thy sins, and healeth all thine infirmities; who saveth thy life from destruction, and year after year crowneth thee with mercy and loving-kindness;" and may I be crowned at length with everlasting glory. Thou wilt soon, O my soul, enter upon another year; let dear-bought experience teach thee to avoid all occasions of evil, and keep thee close to thy God. If thou livest to see another day, set out afresh, and remember to offer the daily sacrifice of obedience as well as of praise to thy gracious God.

- *Behold these three years I come, seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none; cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?—Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.* Luke xiii. 7-9.

THOU fruitless fig-tree, thou barren professor, dost thou hear this, and not tremble? God is come seeking fruit; will thy bare profession, thy knowledge of the principles of religion, satisfy the great God? Will the notions of truth in thy head, thy talking and disputing, thy commending or censuring sermons and preachers, serve thy turn? And wilt thou thus endeavour to ward off the heart-searching God? Know thou, God is come to seek for fruit, and for good fruit from thee; not the fruit of good words only, but the fruit of good works; fruit short of this God will not regard. If thy conscience be awakened, look to thy merciful High Priest; consider well his intercession for such a barren soul as thou art; “Lord, let it alone; Father, let this man live one year longer; O turn away from this thine anger! I will yet see what may be done; I will take other methods; I will try what corrections may do; perhaps the rod may work more upon him than my word has hitherto done; I will also stir up my servants to a more sharp and searching manner; and if these new efforts be blessed to him all shall yet be well, thy grace magnified, and his soul saved; if not, then thou shalt cut him down.” Lord, is there any reason to conclude that I am this barren fig-tree? O search me and see; and if so, deposit thy grace in my heart, that I may bring forth fruit to thy glory.

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY USE.

- Am I vitally united to Jesus Christ?
- Am I crucified with Christ?
- Am I entirely consecrated to Christ?
- Am I daily receiving grace from Christ?
- Am I growing in conformity to Christ?
- Am I a friend to all the friends of Christ?
- Am I living for the glory of Christ?
- Am I an honour to the name of Christ?
- Am I walking in the steps of Christ?
- Am I breathing the spirit of Christ?
- Am I a blessing to the Church of Christ?
- Am I bringing sinners to Christ?
- Am I daily, hourly, always, and in all things
aiming to please Christ?
- Am I grieved on account of the dishonour
done to Christ?
- Am I desiring to be with Christ?
- Am I looking for the advent of Christ?
- Am I ready for the coming of Christ?

PRAYERS.

A PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN GRACES.

HOLY, holy Lord God Almighty, who art, and wast; and art to come; who is a God like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders! Thou art blessed in thyself, and the gracious Author of all our blessings. Thou art the only sovereign Lord, who canst do what thou pleasest in heaven or earth. Thou alone hast everlasting life in thyself, and thou only canst bestow it upon others; and thou dwellest in that light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, or can see. Thou art a God at hand and a God afar off; none can hide himself in secret places, where thou canst not see him, for thou fillest heaven and earth; thine eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good; thou searchest the heart, and triest the reins; even the thoughts and intents of the heart are naked and open before thee.

I know, O Lord, that thou canst do everything; power belongs to thee, and with thee nothing is impossible; what thou hast promised, thou art able also to perform. Thou art good, and doest good, good to all; and thy tender mercy is over all thy works. O

that thou wouldest cause thy goodness to pass before me, that I may taste and see that the Lord is good, and have his loving-kindness always before mine eyes.

O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face before thee; for my iniquities are increased over my head, and my trespass is grown up into the heavens; behold, I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth, and put my mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope, crying out, Unclean, unclean.

Lord, I come to thee as the poor publican, and I pray his prayer, God be merciful unto me a sinner. The God of infinite mercy be merciful to me. Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin; for I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. Purge my conscience with the blood of Jesus, and I shall be clean; wash me in that purple fountain, and I shall be whiter than snow; hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Let me be justified freely by thy grace, through the redemption of Jesus. Take away all mine iniquities, and receive me graciously; hear my backslidings, and love me freely; and let thy anger be turned away from me, for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy. I will say unto God, Do not condemn me, but deliver me from going down into the pit, for thou hast found a ransom. I have sinned Father, against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; but I have an Advocate with thee, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and he is the Propitiation for my sin. Remember the covenant in his blood, and be merciful to mine un-

righteousness, and my sins and my iniquities remember no more.

Let me be justified by faith, and have peace with God through Jesus Christ; and through him let me have access to that grace wherein believers stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Lord, give me a wise and understanding heart; that which I know not, teach thou me; let the Spirit of truth guide me into all truth, and make me to understand wherein I have erred. Make thy way plain before my face, because there are many that watch for my halting; and, by the teaching of thy word and Spirit, make me wise unto salvation.

Unite my heart to fear thy name, that I may keep thy commandments. O put thy fear into my heart, that I may never depart from thee, and let me be in the fear of the Lord all the day long.

Give me grace, I beseech thee, to love thee, the Lord my God, with all my heart, and soul, and mind, and strength; to delight myself always in thee, and therein shall I have the desire of my heart. Circumcise my heart to love thee, and shed abroad thy love abundantly in my heart by the Holy Ghost. May Jesus be very precious to me, as he is to all that believe. Let me delight in him, as the chief of ten thousand, and altogether lovely; and though I have not seen him, yet may I love him, and by believing in him, rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. Let the love of Christ to me constrain me to live, not to myself, but to him that died for me and rose again.

Lord, put upon me that charity which is the bond of perfectness, that I may keep the unity of the

Spirit in the bond of peace, and may live in love and peace, that the God of love and peace may be with me. Give me to love my neighbour as myself, with that love which is the fulfilling of the law; to love him with a pure heart fervently. Enable me to be kindly affectioned towards my Christian brethren; so shall I know that I am passed from death unto life, and all will know that I am thy disciple. Lord, teach me to love mine enemies; to bless them that curse me; to pray for them that despitefully use me; forbearing them, and forgiving them, as I trust thou, for Christ's sake, hast forgiven me.

Lord, give me grace to deny myself, to take up my cross daily, and follow Christ! to keep under the body, and to bring it into subjection; let me learn of Christ to be meek and lowly in heart, that I may find rest to my soul; hide pride from me, and clothe me with humility; and put upon me the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in thy sight is of great price; let anger never rest in my bosom, nor the sun go down upon my wrath, but enable me to show all meekness towards all men; let me have bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, and long-suffering; that the same mind may be in me, which was in Christ Jesus my Lord.

Lord, teach me in every estate to be content: let my conversation be without covetousness; may I always be content with such things as I have; still saying, The will of the Lord be done. Lord, give me grace to weep as though I wept not, to rejoice as though I rejoiced not, to buy as though I possessed not, and to use this world as not abusing it; because the time is short, and the fashion of this world pass-

eth away. May the very God of peace sanctify me wholly ; and I pray God, my whole spirit, and soul, and body, may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let goodness and mercy follow me all the days of my life ; when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, be thou with me, that I may fear no evil ; let thy rod and thy staff comfort me. Redeem my soul from the power of the grave, and receive me ; guide me by thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory, through Jesus Christ my blessed Lord and Saviour ; to whom, with Thee and the Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory, thanksgiving and praise, for ever and ever. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR THE GRACE OF PERSEVERANCE.

ETERNAL God, with whom is everlasting strength, thou art able to keep us from falling, and to perform the good work begun in us, till the day of Jesus Christ. But, Lord, thou knowest how weak and changeable I am ; how apt to shrink back, or start aside, after I have been hopefully set in the way towards heaven ; and in what danger I still am of ruining myself, after all the great things thou hast done for me. O Lord of love, have pity on my infirmities, and strengthen me in my weakness. Preserve me, thou blessed Guardian of thy people, who keepest the feet of thy saints ; O preserve me from the danger of apostacy ; and put thy fear in my heart, that I may not depart from thee. Make me so firmly thine, that nothing which befalls me in the world may ever part thee in my soul ; and make me so resolute for thy service, that nothing which any

can say or do may interrupt me in that way of life which is to depart from hell beneath. Let me not be of the number of those who draw back to destruction ; but of their happy number, who believe to the saving of the soul.

O Lord God, thou hast begun to show thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand ; go on, I pray thee, to work for the glory of thy name, and to perfect that which concerns me. Thou hast been my help, leave me not, nor forsake me, O God of my salvation ; but hold thou me up, and I shall be safe, and I will have respect to thy statutes continually. Establish, O Lord, strengthen, settle me ; and leave me no will or power to resist the gracious designs and methods of thy love and mercy, for the healing and saving of my soul. And as I, by my frailty, do still renew my sins, gracious Lord, through thy mercy, renew me to repentance ; and, though I fall, let me not utterly be cast down, but uphold me by thy almighty hand ; preserve me to thy heavenly kingdom, and keep me by thy power, through faith unto salvation. Lord, make me faithful unto death, that thou mayest give me the crown of life, that blessed end of my faith, even the eternal salvation of my soul, through Jesus Christ, my dear Lord and Saviour. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR A CHILD.

GLORY be to thee, O Lord, in whom I live, and move, and have my being ; who hast preserved me ever since I was born.

I humbly worship thee, O Lord, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, my Redeemer. O give me thy grace, that I may faithfully serve thee all the days of

my life. Wash me from the guilt of my sins in the fountain of Christ's precious blood ; save me daily, by thy grace, from the practice of sin ; let thy good Spirit restrain and cleanse the corruption of my nature ; help me to remember thee, my Creator, in the days of my youth ; preserve me from those errors and follies to which the frailty of my age most exposes me, and keep me innocent from every great offence ; deliver me from lying and vanity, from picking and stealing, from swearing and Sabbath-breaking, and from the temptations of evil company.

Incline my heart to all that is good, that I may be modest and humble, true and just, meek and kind, temperate and diligent, respectful and obedient to all my superiors ; and especially that I may fear and love thee above all, and my neighbour as myself. Let thy good providence defend me from all evil, night and day ; let the grace of thy Holy Spirit continually direct and assist me ; bless me in my learning, and help me daily to increase in knowledge and wisdom, and in all virtues ; instruct me, O Lord, more and more in the truths of thy holy word, and in the knowledge of thy salvation, that I may live holily, die comfortably, and be eternally happy in thy kingdom of bliss and glory.

Bless all my dear friends, relations, and benefactors ; grant to them whatever may be good for them in this life, and guide them and me to everlasting happiness in thy kingdom, through Jesus Christ, my dear Lord and Saviour. Amen. Our Father, &c.

AN ADDRESS BEFORE PUBLIC WORSHIP.

LORD, I am now in thy house ; assist me, I pray thee, and accept of my services ; let thy Holy Spirit help mine infirmities, disposing my heart to seriousness, attention, and devotion, to the honour of thy holy name, and the benefit of my soul, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

AFTER THE SERMON IS DONE.

BLESSED be thy name, O Lord, for this opportunity of attending thee in thy house and service. Make me, I pray thee, a doer of thy word, and not a hearer only. Accept both us and our services, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

BEFORE MEAT.

HEAVENLY Father, as thou hast kindly made this provision for our wants, condescend to sanctify it to our use, and give us grace to eat and drink to thy glory. Feed our souls with the bread of life, and indulge us with communion with thyself, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

AFTER MEAT.

GRACIOUS Lord, we bless thee for every manifestation of thy kindness, especially for the food we have now received for the refreshment of our bodies ; ever more supply our wants as they return, and grant us every spiritual blessing that we need, for our dear Redeemer's sake. Amen.





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